DISCLAIMER:

This document does not meet the
current format guidelines of
the Graduate School at
The University of Texas at Austin.

It has been published for
informational use only.

The Dissertation Committee for Kimberli Gant Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Eko o ni Baje (May Lagos Be Indestructible): Lens-based Representations of Transformation in Lagos, Nigeria, 1990-2001

Committee:

Cherise Smith, Supervisor

Eddie Chambers

Moyo Okediji

George Flaherty

Christa Clarke

Eko o ni Baje (May Lagos Be Indestructible: Lens-based Representations of Transformations in Lagos, Nigeria, 1990-2001

by

Kimberli Gant, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2017

Dedication

J.D. Okhai Ojeikere (1930-2014)

Acknowledgements

Writing about contemporary art history is not possible without artists, previous scholars and archival research. There are numerous artists to thank who gave selflessly of their time, brilliance and personal archives in order for me to complete my dissertation. I want to start with the artists who are the focus of this project, Akinbode Akinbiyi, Otobong Nkanga and Rem Koolhaas. Akinbiyi and Nkanga were gracious enough to spend time with me on numerous occasions in person speaking candidly, answering questions and discussing their work, biographies, studio practices, and archives via email and telephone. Although I was unable to communicate with Koolhaas directly, the assistants at his architectural studio graciously found information for me when I needed it and I was able to speak with his collaborator and film director Bregtje van der Haak, who courteously corresponded with me via skype and email. All three people provided invaluable information for me to analyze their work and place it within a social and art historical trajectory. I hope that should any of you read this paper, you feel as though I did justice to your work as without your images and knowledge this project could not have occurred as well as I feel it did.

I also want to thank the numerous other artists I met in Lagos whose work is not in my dissertation but hope to work with in the future and gave important visual and historical context. J.D. Okhai Ojeikere, who originally was to be a case study and tragically passed away during my research, spent hours with me during my first visit to Lagos in 2013. He showed me his incredible photographic archive dating back to 1960, discussed his work, Lagos and his artistic process. His son Amaize stayed in contact with

me and I consider him an amazing friend. Photographer Tam Fiofori was another guiding force while I worked on this project. He was kind enough to introduce me to Ojeikere so I could interview him. Fiofori also allowed me to interview him and view his amazing archive, introducing me to his artistic colleagues, as well as several younger photographers he was mentoring, expanding my knowledge and network of Lagos' photography scene. I also want to thank Prince Yemisi Shyllon, founder of OYASAF, the Nigerian non-profit organization that supported me while I was in Nigeria in 2013 conducting my initial dissertation research. Prince Shyllon graciously provided with me on the ground support and introduced me to an incredible group of collectors and patrons of the arts while I was in Lagos.

My academic support has been amazing throughout my entire PhD process. Dr. Cherise Smith, my advisor, has been an immense personal and professional supporter of mine. She believed in this project and has helped my curatorial career progress these past several years. She has always been there for me when I needed her and been a quiet force and source of wisdom. Dr. Eddie Chambers has been another great supporter of my research and given me the guidance to move forward through his thoughtful provocations. Dr. Moyosore Okediji has been an amazing source of information on Nigerian art, culture, and history. He allowed me to just think things through, ask him questions and just gave me great insight into the Yoruba culture. Dr. George Flaherty was another important sounding board on issues of urbanization and had amazing some insights I may not have uncovered on my own. Finally, Dr. Christa Clarke, a colleague who graciously agreed to join my committee later in the process, has been an amazing

colleague, mentor and friend. I would not have made it through this past year of writing while working full-time at the Newark Museum without her letting me grab her attention to ask random theoretical questions as I pondered how to move my arguments forward. She gave me the flexibility to get this project done while I was working with her.

The entire venture of completing a PhD would not have been possible without my family, both genetically related and those connected through our personal and professional bonds. Phillip, LaJule, and Lyndsay Gant, my immediate family, thank you for letting me call whenever I felt I needed a hug from far away, or a care package or just an ear to continue working. All of you kept me sane and I will always love you for that. Lisbeth Gant-Britton, my aunt and the first person I knew with a doctorate, has been one of my most important persons throughout my entire academic career. I have relied on your guidance since I started applying to college during high school, and I have needed you throughout my MA and PhD programs. You let me cry, let me ask you any question I felt necessary, you reminded me how important my research was, and you knew what I was going through. I cannot thank you enough. My sisters from other misters, Tatiana Reinoza, Rose Salseda, and Carris Adams, you also let me cry, scream or vent, and you each gave me critical advice. You each read through drafts and/or gave me feedback, which made this dissertation the great work it is. I could not have gone through these years without each and every one of you.

Eko o ni Baje (May Lagos Be Indestructible: Lens-based Representations of Transformations in Lagos, Nigeria, 1990-2001

Kimberli Gant, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2017

Supervisor: Cherise Smith

This study investigates lens-based depictions of transformations in Lagos, Nigeria. Using archival research, interviews and close visual analysis I examine photographic and filmic narratives of change and evolution throughout the city in 1990-2002. The decade ending the twentieth century and beginning the twenty-first saw scholars and curators interested in Lagos as part of a growing body of research on the physical and demographic expansion of cities in the "Global South." Nigerian and non-Nigerian artists during this same period were also focusing on Lagos as a muse for representing the specificities of working class, daily life in African urban centers. My project highlights a singular image or scene by three such artists, Akinbode Akinbiyi, Otobong Nkanga, and Rem Koolhaas, who each created a lens-based series of images about Lagos' continual transition. I argue that Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in a striped dress walking across the sidewalk] (1995), Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* (2001), and Koolhaas' *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001) show Lagos as in a state of constant flux, depicting older spiritual practices adapted for a contemporary setting, citizens modifying the landscape for economic uplift, and historical architecture as physical markers of previous colonial shifts.

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Lagos, Nigeria, is a city at once historical and contemporary, a megacity and rural. It is home to millions of people with unknown individual and communal stories. During the day, citizens are everywhere, working as vendors plying their wares or riding to offices in Volkswagen minibuses across the Third Mainland Bridge to Victoria Island. Yet, at night, major streets are completely empty. Lagosians are inside their homes preparing for the next day, and one hears the hum from thousands of gas-filled generators. Lagos is a place of complicated people and ever-growing space, filled with hidden stories and contradictions. So with all of its intricacies and complication, how can one actually visually represent such a place? The fact is: one cannot encapsulate Lagos in any one way. The city has too much history, dating back to at least the fifteenth century,[1] and has/is undergoing so much transformation; it is impossible to reduce it to one idea or one point of view. Rather, one can create a window into a small part of Lagos' saga, presenting artistic perspectives focusing on a specific place or time or approach, revealing a "snapshot" of the largest city on the African continent.[2] I endeavor to create my own snapshot of Lagos with this dissertation by exploring lens-based depictions of the city between 1991 and 2002.

---

1 Writer John Losi's early publication on Lagos gives a date of 1699; however, scholar Liora Bigon refutes Losi's dating since it is in based on oral history. She states an earlier date of the fifteenth century based on Portuguese written records. John Losi, *History of Lagos* (Lagos: Tika-Tore Press, 1914); Liora Bigon, *A History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals: Residential Segregation in British Lagos and French Dakar (1850-1930)* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009): 52-29; Agboola Ashake Onikoyi, *The History of Lagos* (Toklast Press, Ltd., 1975): 12-13.

2 In a study based on UN estimated population data, Lagos had the largest urbanized area or urban agglomeration. Due to lack of accurate census date, the researcher relied on 1991. Richard Forstall, Richard Greene, and Jack Pick, "Which Are the Largest? Why Lists of Major Urban Areas Vary so Greatly," *Tijdschrift voor Economishche en Sociale Geografie* 100, no. 3 (2009): 277-297.

Images of Lagos provide viewers a powerful way of not only comparing what was to what is, therefore giving a better understanding of transformation as a process, but also giving clues as to an artist's perspective on the city. They help craft visible narratives and notions beyond scholarly statistics or theories, or even historical facts, about Lagos' development. While I can state that Lagos is currently one of only two megacities in Africa,[3] and the third largest city in the world, those are abstract concepts.[4] However, when presenting an image of Broad Street in Lagos Island by Nigerian photographer Akinbode Akinbiyi (fig 1.1), the aforementioned statistics and facts seem contradictory. The image shows several pedestrians strolling along an empty street with three different high-rise buildings and two short bungalows. Here Lagos resembles a town rather than a major city. Akinbiyi's image was taken during the late morning after professional workers were in their offices so fewer people were on the street, creating a discrepancy between photograph and statistics.[5] Images can, thus, tell a very different tale than scholarly text while still giving crucial contextual and aesthetic information.

This dissertation presents a few of Lagos' changes and transformations through photographic and cinematic representations by contemporary artists. The word choice of "transformation" as opposed to "change" in the title of the project was quiet deliberate. Though both words relate to the notion of a physical shift, transformation has the

---

3 The city had less than 10 million people prior to 1975. Researchers estimated that by 2015 Lagos would have a population of over 23 million people, making it just below Tokyo and Bombay, which are both estimated to have just above 26 million people. Fouad Benimerad, Ravi Sinhha, and Friedmann Wenzel, "Megacities – Megarisks," *Natural Hazards* 42 no. 3 (September 2007): 483.

4 This statement about Lagos was based on the city's estimated population for 2015. Adetokunbo Oluwole Ilesanmi, "Urban Sustainability in the Context of Lagos mega-city," *Journal of Geography and Regional Planning* 3, no. 10 (October 2010): 241.

5 Interview with Akinbode Akinbiyi, Berlin, Germany June 24, 2014.

connotation of a complete change, where the end result is so drastically different the original object may be unrecognizable, cannot return to that former form, and/or may not be thought of in the same way.[6] Scholar Eugenia Herbert writes of the use of iron and metallurgy in communities within Zaire, and how once the material has undergone the process of making it from a naturally found metal into a staff for local priestess it is imbued with powers through a sacred ritual. Though the iron object has not changed it basic components, the community sees it as a spiritual symbol that can only be used in particular ways. The object has not just changed shape or form, but has been transformed as the community now considers it completely different than when it was just a mineral and it is also used in a very specific way. In essence the very process of transformation is powerfully as a piece of rock can become something spiritual and connected to the divine.[7]

In addition transformation connotes a change or shift on major level. In his book *Post-colonial Transformation* the author, scholar Bill Ashcroft discusses how the history and legacy of "post-colonial" studies. He argues in his introduction he purposefully utilized the terms "post-colonial" and "transformation" because post-colonial discourse ultimately transformed various scholarly disciplines across the Academy because for the first time the "discourse of the colonized," those whose communities, societies, economies, and politics were fundamentally shifted a result of Imperialism and colonization. Within the inclusion of these formerly excluded voices scholars and

---

[6] When examining the etomology of the prefix "trans" the definition refers to "changing thoroughly," and in the definition of change, it uses the word "transform" to describe converting form, as opposed to referencing substitution, as when someone changes his or her shoes.

[7] Eugenia Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power: Rituals of Transformation in African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993): 12-14.

researchers could no long ignore the perspectives of individuals and groups affected by Western Enlightenment philosophy and beliefs and the unequal power dynamics of colonization on countries throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, etc. Ashcroft states that, "Whereas 'development' acts to force the local into globally normative patterns, 'transformation' acts to adjust those patterns to the requirements of local values and needs. This capacity to adjust global influences to local needs disrupts the simple equation of globalization and Westernization, the idea that globalization is a simple top-down homogenizing pressure."[8] With this statement Ashcroft connects the definition of "transformation" to a global project that also considers the needs to local communities. Postcolonial transformation relates to entire populations because the discourse references not just individuals, but entire nations and continents affected by Western Imperialism.

Similarly to Herbert's and Ashcroft's scholarship, I use transformation in relation to my scholarship on Lagos because the images I analyze show how the city has fundamentally shifted and changed over the course of a century. Through land reclamation efforts, planned and unplanned urban planning, individual and communal claiming of space, the city has repeated evolved to the point where it no longer looks, feels, or is understood by citizens the way it was a generation ago. The city has not only undergone one transformation, but numerous, some of which have occurred in the same place, or are a result of Lagos' expansion into formerly rural areas. Moreover, while some of these changes may seem small in that an old building was destroyed for a new

[8] Bill Ashcroft, "Introduction," in *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London: Routledge, 2001): 12-17.

one, they have occurred all throughout the city, such that there is an accumulative effect of transforming the look and human engagement with Lagos as a whole.

I hint at Lagos' transformation within the title of the project using the Yoruba phrase "Eko o ni baje." The phrase is considered the slogan of the city, adopted by the former Lagos State Governor Babetunde Fashola. It can be translated in a variety of ways: "May Lagos be indestructible," "Lagos will never be destroyed," Lagos shall never decline," and "Lagos will never degenerate."[9] No matter the exact translation the connotation is that despite the city's numerous economic, environmental and/or political problems, Lagos and Lagosians are resilient. Fashola also used it as a rallying cry to push his agenda of Lagos as "a city of excellence," proposing to locals, the nation, and even the world, the idea of the "Lagos Dream," where Lagos would become known as the most modern mega-city in the twenty-first century, and but all Nigerians could come to Lagos and make their socioeconomic dreams come true.[10] However, despite Fashola's promise, his policies actually discriminated against impoverished individuals and communities and the mentally ill. Instead of the political leaders making it a city of excellence for all, most inhabitants consider it a place of exacerbated social inequity that is really only hospitable to the extremely wealthy or foreign investor.

---

[9] For references to the various translations, meaning and uses for the phrase "Eko o ni baje," refer to the following: Adeyemi Adegoju, "Indigenous language orientation for effective citizenship education in 21st century Africa: reflections on the Nigerian experience," *Sociolingusitic Studies* 7 no. 3 (2013): 281-82; Ebun Akinsete, Fabienne Hoelzel, and Lookman Oshodi, "Delivering Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Emerging Nations: Introducing Neighborhood Hotspots," *Journal of Architectural Education* 68, no. 2 (2014): 238; Ayo Ojebode and Wole Oladapo, "The Power of Truth-Driven Propaganda: A Rhetorical Criticism of Governor Ajimobi's political slogan: Ki Oyou Da'a, Ajumose Gbogbo wa ni'," *Research in African Languages and Linguistics* 13 (2014):50; Tunde Olusola Opeibi, "One Message, Many Tongues: An exploration of media multilingualism in Nigerian political discourse," *Journal of Language and Politics* 6, no.2 (2007): 238.

[10] Adeyemi Adegoju, "Indigenous language orientation for effective citizenship education in 21st century Africa: reflections on the Nigerian experience," 282.

I use the proverb in my title because it refers to Lagos' Yoruba roots, citizens of all socioeconomic backgrounds refer to the city through the phrase, and most importantly both the words and the city cannot be directly translated. Both the physical environment and language used to describe it are being constantly reinvented. Despite how the political leaders use the phrase *Eko o ni baje*, Lagoisans still consider it uplifting and reflect their tenacity in the face of adversity. No matter the problems the city may face, no matter how many times the city will rebuild itself according to a particular person's individual vision, Lagos thrives. Moreover, the city thrives through the efforts of the mass population who unofficially control a great deal of the city, how it works, and where it will go in the future.

I examine still photographs by two generations of Nigerian artists, Akinbode Akinbiyi and Otobong Nkanga, as well as a film by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. Their representations depict Lagos as a city in constant flux. The artists' works show how the physical results of political, economic, social, and cultural policies impact Lagosians: the destruction of older architectural forms and working-class informal community dwellings, new residential and commercial developments on the city's outskirts, alternative uses for public space, and Yoruba cultural beliefs adapting to a multi-ethnic, urban locale.

During the decade 1991-2002, Lagos rose as an interesting case study for international academics and curators. Lagos was part of a global trend of rapid urbanization in the "Global South": Asia, Africa and Latin America. Cities in the "Global South" were growing at twice the rate of those in the West. Urban and economic

theorists attributed this phenomenon to 1980s policies by the International Monetary Fund.[11] International curators also took notice and began curating projects on Western and non-Western cities as a theme for modern and contemporary art. Lagos was a case study in three local and international exhibitions between 1997 and 2001: *Many Faces of Lagos*, Goethe-Institut Lagos (1997); *Africas: The Artist & The City*, Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona (2001); *Century City: Art & Culture in the Modern Metropolis*, Tate Modern (2001). The latter two exhibitions featuring Lagos were groundbreaking projects on the relationship between art and urban spaces. My project concentrates specifically on photographic depictions of Lagos within one decade, providing a more in-depth analysis of these representations and how they frame architectural, cultural, and social issues facing that city. There has yet to be any scholarly, art historical examination of Lagos unrelated to an art exhibition.

1991 marked the beginning of critical change for Lagos, and Nigeria more broadly. Nigeria's federal capital moved from Lagos to the newly built city of Abuja, along with all governmental administration.[12] In 1999 Nigeria then shifted from a

---

[11] Here are some of the books and articles that discuss Lagos as part of a global trend in rising urbanization and urban poverty throughout non-Western cities: Ellen Brennan, "Population, Urbanization, Environment and Security: A Summary of the Issues," *Environmental Change & Security Project Report* 5 (Summer 1999): 4-14; D.W.T. Crompton and L. Savioli, "Intestinal Parasitic Infections and Urbanization," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 71, no. 1 (1993): 1-7; Alan Gilbert and Joseph Gugler, *Cities, Poverty and Development: Urbanization in the Third World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); J.D. Kasarda and E.M. Crenshaw, "Third World Urbanization: Dimensions, Theories, and Determinants," *Annual Review of Sociology* 17 (1991): 467-501; John Kasarda and Allan Parnell, *Third World Cities: Problems, Policies and Prospects* (New York: SAGE Publications, 1993); Porus Olpadwala and William Goldsmith, "The Sustainability of Privilege: Reflections on the Environment, the Third World City and Poverty," *World Development* 20, no. 4 (1992): 627-640; David Simon, 'Urbanization, Globalization, and the Economic Crisis in Africa," in *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Large Cities*, Carole Rakoid, ed. (New York: United Nations University Press, 1997): 74-108.

[12] Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *History of Nigeria* (Leiden: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 276-77.

military dictatorship to a democratically elected president and state governors.[13] Nigeria's new officials, including Lagos State governor, Ahmed Bola Tinubu, tried economic tactics, such as cutting public infrastructure and increasing corporate investment and privatization, to end a national recession that began in 1981.[14] Lagos' unemployment rose as a result of eliminating public infrastructural projects and reducing civil employment. The situation was exacerbated by an increase in Lagos' population from approximately 4,000,000 in 1980 to 12,000,000 in 2000. The city needed more land for residential and commercial development, thus expanding its borders on the mainland and land reclamation in Victoria Island and Ikoyi.[15] Older local architectural styles and informal houses on government-owned land were also destroyed in favor of American-style suburban housing, high-rise apartments, and corporate headquarters.[16]

***

Nigerian photographer Akinbode Akinbiyi (b. 1944) began an ongoing photographic series on Lagos entitled *All Roads* in 1980. His images of Lagos' historic

---

13 Ibid, 276-77.

14 Nigeria had a federal debt totaling $30 billion owed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) since 1985, most of which was due to the collapsing international oil export prices. Matthew Gandy, "Planning, Anti-Planning and the infrastructure Crisis Facing Metropolitan Lagos," *Urban Studies* 43, no. 2 (February 2006): 381; Falola and Heaton, *History of Nigeria*, 257-60; Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the Case of Two Housing Estates in Lagos," in *Global Gentrifications: Uneven Development and Displacement*, eds. Loretta Lees, Hyun Bang Shin, and Ernesto Lopez-Morales (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015): 312.

15 Jośe Barredo and Luca Demicheli, "Urban Sustainability in Developing Countries' Megacities: Modelling and Predicting Future Urban Growth in Lagos," *Cities* 20, no. 5 (2003); 299, 304.

16 Tunde Agbola and A.M. Jinadu, "Forced Eviction and Forced Relocation in Nigeria: The Experience of those Evicted from Maroko in 1990," *Environment and Urbanization* 9, no. 2 (October 1997): 271-288; Daniel Immerwahr, "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Postcolonial Lagos, 1960-1986," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 19, no. 2 (December 2007): 177-82; Taibat Lawanson, Omoayena Yadua, and Idris Salako, "Environmental Challenges of Peri-Urban Settlements the Lagos Megacity," in *Remixing the City: Towards Sustainability and Resilience?* (Paper presented at the 17th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society, Schwechat, Austria, May 14-16, 2012): 275-85; R.A. Olu Sule, "Recent Slum Clearance Exercise in Lagos (Nigeria): Victims or Beneficiaries?," *GeoJournal* 22, no. 1 (September 1990): 81-91.

center represent buildings and public spaces as palimpsests of transition during the colonial and post-Independence eras. Lagos' written history dates back 500 years to economic and political relationships between Portugal, Brazil, and the United Kingdom. Akinbiyi presents existing traces of this earlier history to show Lagos' prior shifts over an extended period. The city is not just being remade in the present, but has been remade numerous times in the past.

Akinbiyi was raised in Lagos until his university studies in Germany in the early 1970s. He is now based in Berlin, Germany, but returns to Lagos several times a year to continue *All Roads*. The project's impetus began after a return visit to Lagos in 1977 to photograph events during the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC). He noticed differences in the city from his childhood, the loss of Brazilian and modernist architecture, growth in size, and reduction in space. He photographed areas that looked dissimilar from his memories as well as sites/sights still familiar from his youth.[17]

My first chapter focuses on an untitled Akinbiyi image of Broad Street in Lagos in which a woman in a striped dress walks across the sidewalk (1995, fig. 1.1), which references three different generations of architecture on a major roadway as a symbol of cyclical urban development. The buildings reflect Lagos' colonial Brazilian and British communities, post-Independence era, and current position as a global financial hub. The photograph represents Lagos' physical and metaphorical changes over a century. By

[17] Interview with Akinbiyi Akinbode, Lagos, Nigeria, May 20, 2013.

highlighting one street, Akinbiyi also draws awareness to roadways as silent markers of transformation and community displacement.

Akinbiyi's *All Roads* series responds to mid-twentieth-century Nigerian artists and writers creating new "modern" Nigerian literary and visual forms. Writers and artists, such as Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), Wole Soyinka (b. 1934), and Uche Okeke (1933-2016), were interested in artistic forms reflecting their individual cultural heritages (Yoruba, Igbo), as well as a new post-colonial national identity as Nigerian, while also incorporating Western styles and techniques, and the English language. Okeke outlined his practice as "natural synthesis," a hybridized art practice blending western artistic techniques with local cultural and national forms and styles.[18] Achebe wrote about similar sentiments by creating a Nigerian literary form during the post-Independence era where "African writers [wrote] out of an African experience and… [a] commitment to an African destiny."[19] He stated: "Let no one be fooled by the fact that we may write in English, for we intend to do unheard of things with it."[20] Achebe and Okeke's practices did not romanticize Nigeria's pre-colonial past or rely completely on colonial influence. Rather, these artists mixed approaches together, producing works representing a hybrid postcolonial Nigeria.

Untitled [Woman in a striped dress walking across the sidewalk] acknowledges Akinbiyi's predecessors' achievements by photographing a contemporary Nigeria that

---

[18] Uche Okeke and other students studying at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology (NCAST) in Zaria developed the Art Society and the theory of "natural synthesis" in 1960. Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015): 88-92.

[19] Chinua Achebe, "Colonialist Criticism," in *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (New York: Anchor Press, 1975): 10.

[20] Ibid, 10.

references Lagos' colonial and postcolonial past. I argue that the photograph shows traces of former social, political, and economic transformations through three different generations of architecture.[21] Akinbiyi, like Okeke and Soyinka, was trying to represent a place that he knew intimately, undergoing constant change due to outside influences. He focuses on a public space not initially interesting on the surface, but interesting from the perspective of Lagosians, a space that could show over a century of development and growth. Akinbiyi's image engages with individuals of his generation, privileged citizens, who grew up in Lagos during the last decades of colonialism, who remember a smaller, quieter city, not its current manifestation as a megacity.

Visualizing how Lagos' cultural past merges with its present continues in Nigerian artist Otobong Nkanga's work (b. 1974). She created the photographic *Road Series* (2001), depicting rural landscapes surrounding the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway on the city's periphery. Her images show Lagos' adjustable borders. As land property within the center becomes more expensive, middle-class and working-class families are forced to rent or build homes wherever they can find available space. Lagos' outward expansion potentially destroys sacred sites, unseating Yoruba spirits onto public roads, and causing car accidents (or so it is believed).

Nkanga was born a generation after Akinbiyi and also raised in Lagos. She did not experience British colonial policies, but grew up during Nigeria's "oil boom" and

[21] Lisa Lindsay, "To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos," *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 15, no. 1 (1994): 22-50.

Lagos' massive infrastructural development in the 1970s [22] and the aforementioned recession and military dictatorships in the 1980s and 1990s.[23] Nkanga, like Akinbiyi, is also based in Europe, albeit in Antwerp, Belgium. She regularly returns to the city to visit family, and during one of those trips, she created her *Road Series*. In 2001 Nkanga was home from art school in Paris. Traveling on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway with fellow photographer Amaize Ojeikere, she noticed remnants of car crashes along the roadside. The sights triggered Nkanga's memories of a car accident that she experienced a decade earlier, one that resulted in her mother's death.[24] I focus on *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* (2001, fig. 2.1), showing a highly distorted photograph of an abandoned danfo (bus). Although the image was inspired by a personal trauma, it references the larger epidemic of car accidents along Lagos' roadways and the cultural mythology of Yoruba spirits causing these accidents. It also illustrates the development of the city's peripheral locales.

Nkanga is part of a generation of global and transnational Nigerian artists. She is one of a cadre of highly mobile African intelligentsia living abroad, creating work reflecting her multiple personal, cultural, and national identities as a woman, contemporary artist, Ibibo, Lagosian, Nigerian, and Belgian. The mobility of contemporary African artists is debated through the coined term *Afropolitan*, discussed by scholar Achille Mbembe and writer Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu. Tuali-Wosornu defines

---

[22] Nigeria exported oil starting in 1958, although production increased rapidly after the end of the Civil War in 1966 from 396 million barrels in 1970 to 823 million in 1974. High revenues from oil exportation created a national dependence on those revenues. The national wealth created from petroleum resulted in expenditures for massive projects, such as farm and road restoration, airports and schools. Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 223-26.

[23] Between 1970 and 1993, Nigeria had four military dictators and one elected president: General Yakubu Gowon (1966-1975), General Murtala Mohammed (1975-76), President Shehu Shagari (1979-1983), General Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1985) and General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993). Ibid, 174-209.

[24] Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Berlin, Germany, June 21, 2013.

Afropolitans as children of African immigrants who between 1960 and 1984 left for Canada, the United States, and Britain for better economic and educational opportunities. She attributes the exodus to the national economic deterioration and civil wars across the African continent. Afropolitans are directly connected to Africa through their birth or through their parents, but they have grown up or live in the United States, Asia, or Europe. She calls them "not citizens, but Africans of the world."[25]

Mbembe does not define an Afropolitan, but discusses Afropolitanism as a contemporary complex manifestation of ongoing human movement into, out of, and around the African continent. Currently, hundreds of thousands of people born and raised on the African continent are living outside of it; many others were born to African immigrants living in Europe, the United States, or Canada. In addition, African subjects are from families who can trace their ancestry to immigrant grandparents or great-grandparents from Syria, Lebanon, India, and Holland, who settled in Nigeria, Ghana or South Africa. Mbembe cites Afropolitanism as an "imbrication of the here and elsewhere, the presence of the elsewhere in the here, and vice versa."[26] Afropolitans have a cultural sensitivity to familiar places, real or imaginary, to customs and traditions, or to physical features, relatable to situations and people, as they travel or live in other parts of the world.

Nkanga's work incorporates Mbembe's and Tuakli-Wosornu's theories on Afropolitanism through her complex discussion of place. *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* presents

---

[25] Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu, "Global Connections," *International Review of African American Art* 22, no. 3 (2008): 36.

[26] Achille Mbembe, "Afropolitianisme," *Africultures* 1, no. 66 (2006): 13.

Lagos' peripheral spaces: rural lands transitioning into peri-urban areas as citizens migrate, trying to find affordable places to live. They are spaces of human, cosmic, terrestrial, and mechanic flow. Migrants recreate their familiar home environments in a new landscape, making relationships with individuals sharing similar traditions, customs, and language. These individuals remake Lagos as it expands into a collection of neighborhoods based on class, ethnic group, region, and religion. Furthermore, Nkanga's image is based on her personal memories of a location and the societies that she is connected to, identifies with, but no longer calls home. While *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* addresses Lagos and Lagosians directly, it also references the broader, universal themes of urbanization, spirituality, environmentalism, economic inequality, and change, issues applicable to numerous cities and societies around the world. In this way, her work appeals to Lagosians and other urbanities experiencing similar situations.

While both Nkanga and Akinbiyi present situations and sights in their images that can resonate with local populations, both artists are no longer directly connected with Lagos. Their position reflects of "insider-outsiders," individuals whose origins are based in a particular nation-state, but have migrated away from that geographic and cultural space to take residence in another.[27] In those host countries the migrated individuals become influenced by their new experiences creating hybrid cultures, or what scholar Homi Bhaba calls "the third space."[28] Each artists' representations of Lagos is not purely based on local understandings because both have been influenced by their decades living

---

[27] Dimeji Togunde and Sylvester Osagie, "Icons of Progress: Returnees' Effects on Decisions by Nigerians to Migrate to the US," *International Review of Modern Technology* 25, no.1 (Spring 2009): 122.

[28]

throughout Europe. Though both have family members still residing in and around the city, Nkanga and Akinbiyi only return to Lagos annually or semi-annually for extended vacations and/or professional residencies. They are not up-to-date on the latest urban or governmental policy changes, gossip or general ways of being, though they can reintegrate for short periods through their familial and social kinship networks.

Locally based Nigerians consider members of the Nigerian Diaspora as "away people" by locals due to their primary location outside of the country.[29] Unfortunately though there is research concerning kinship relationships between those who have migrated abroad and their familial counterparts at home,[30] there is no research on the perspective of returnees or "away people" by those living at home. Do locals believe those in the diaspora are no longer truly Nigerian, Yoruba, Igbo, etc.? I have yet to find an answer to that question, though some scholars have argued that no matter what the perspectives of locals towards the migrated, there is traditionally a strong sense of familial connection relationships due to cultural practices. Within the Yoruba community families will usually financially support other members to migrate and returnees will then send remittances back to ensure survival.[31] The financial exchange maintains relationships even across vast distances keeping a link between the individual abroad and

---

[29] Statement made by Moyo Ojekediji in an interview, March 23, 2017.

[30] Olayinka Akanle, "Kinship Socio-Economics of Nigerian International Migrants," *Diaspora Studies* 4, no.2 (2011): 105-23; Olayinka Akanle and Olanrewau Akinpelu Olutayo, "Kinship Construction Variability among Nigerian International Migrants: The Context of Contemporary Diaspora," *Human Affairs* 21 (2011): 470-80; Oladele Arowolo, "Return Migration and the Problem of Reintegration," *International Migration* 38, no. 5 (2000): 59-82; Dimeji Togunde and Sylvester Osagie, "Icons of Progress: Returnees' Effects on Decisions by Nigerians to Migrate to the US".

[31] Olayinka Akanle, "Kinship Socio-Economics of Nigerian International Migrants," 112-14.

their family at home. What is not clear however is if the migrated person loses their cultural identity if they remain abroad for decades or refuse to return home.

In considering the complicated relationship between Lagosians living in the city and those living abroad it is not clear how locals would react to Akinbiyi's and Nkanga's visual representations of Lagos. As the artists return to Lagos see friends, family and the city itself, they may have to reintegrate themselves in remembering how things work, where favorite places are located and learning all of the new changes the city offers. Returnees may connect more with their work because both they and the artists share a background of migration and the myriad of experiences that come along with that, including the awkwardness to relearning home. Individuals who have consistently stayed in Nigeria may also relate to certain aspects of Akinbiyi's and Nkanga's images, but may not find the work truly resembles the Lagos they know because their encounters are different. What sights/sites the artists find of interest because of their lives abroad could be of complete interest to locals. It is the perspective of physical and temporal distance from the place they grew up in, and occasionally return too, that adds a unique layer the artist's point of view and depictions.

Finally, Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas' film *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001) moves photographic practices beyond still photography to images in motion. Viewers see Lagosians move through Lagos in cars, buses, on motorbikes, engaging with each other, Koolhaas, and his team. Viewers also watch Koolhaas observe and interact with Lagosians; they see how citizens engage and transform the city for their economic, political, and social benefit. Unlike Akinbiyi or Nkanga, Koolhaas is not from Lagos, not

Nigerian, nor is he from the African continent. He is from Holland, living and working in Amsterdam, and teaching architecture at Harvard University in Boston. *Lagos/Koolhaas* is an example of outside, Western depictions of Lagos, where Koolhaas is enamored with working-class Lagosian lifestyles, since they are so different from his own.

Lagos/Koolhaas is a documentary-style film, although highly manipulated and edited with split screens, high-speed sequences, diegetic and non-diegetic sounds, and interviews. Koolhaas presents Lagos as a spectacle of human adaptation. In viewing seemingly mundane locations, such as a privately built recycling plant, an electronics marketplace, a food market, and a city observed from inside a bus, audiences receive Koolhaas' fascination with how Lagosians manage their day-to-day lives within a system where traditional public services are privatized and resources are scarce. The architect puts forth a narrative of Lagosians as entrepreneurial, ingenious, and adaptive, as they find alternative ways and means of organizing the city to best fit their individual survival.

I focus on one sequence in *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001, figs. 3.1-3.5): it juxtaposes a scene in which Koolhaas travels through Lagos on a major roadway during rush hour with hundreds of street traders selling food, drinks, household items, jewelry and electronics, to one in which he lectures on this same phenomenon to an invisible audience. The sequence demonstrates how Lagosians use roads for travel as well as commerce, since typical travel commutes can take between two-to-three hours, enabling vendors to generate an income. Viewers also hear Koolhaas commenting on traffic and vendors, representing himself as a pre-eminent scholar on Lagos and its inhabitants despite not having intimate knowledge of the locale.

Koolhaas' film, like Akinbiyi's or Nkanga's photographs, presents Lagos through a personal engagement with the city. Unlike theirs, Koolhaas' take is based on first contact. *Lagos/Koolhaas* shows a very different perspective on the city as compared to the work of Koolhaas' Nigerian counterparts, since he had no previous first-hand knowledge of Lagos before filming. *Lagos/Koolhaas* was a part of Koolhaas' larger project with Harvard's School of Design entitled "Project on the City." It was a multi-media, multi-city investigation of specific regions around the world experiencing powerful changes.[32] As an architect and urban planner, Koolhaas was interested in rapid urbanization within Western and non-Western cities globally, and he wondered whether cities without heavily proscribed urban planning were the future.[33] Lagos was a case study for this project, and *Lagos/Koolhaas* was an end result, along with the publication *Mutations* (2000).

Koolhaas' film is a counterpoint to the "ethnographic films" of previous generations of post-WWII Europeans, which emphasized "magical" and "natural" qualities of "native" peoples and locations throughout Latin America, Asia, Africa, Canada and the United States.[34] For instance, French director Jean Rouch (1917-2004) made several films about rural Sorko spiritual practices outside Bamako, Mali, between 1946 and 1949. His later film *Les Maîtres fous* (1954) on Songhay spiritual practices in Accra, Ghana, garnered him international acclaim, but he was criticized for continuing

---

[32] Rem Koolhaas, et.al, "Introduction," in *Mutations* (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2001): 19.

[33] Rem Koolhaas, "Whatever Happened to Urbanism?" *Design Quarterly* 164 (1995): 28. Republished from *S,M,L, XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995).

[34] For a general history of Western cinematic depictions of Asia, Latin-America, Africa and Native-Americans in the United States as a part of anthropological research see Emile de Brigard, "The History of Ethnographic Film" in *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, Third Edition, Paul Hockings, ed. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003): 13-44.

European myths of African mystique and "uncivilized" practices, thus emphasizing racist prejudices.[35] *Lagos/Koolhaas* references these early anthropological films, since Koolhaas is a European scholar conducting field research in West Africa, a place he is venturing anew. He also edited the film in such a way as to push forward his narrative of Lagosian difference by aestheticizing poverty in Lagos. However, unlike the earlier genre, Koolhaas highlighted the city and urbanization, rather than spiritual practices, and he interviewed Lagosians, presenting viewers with local perspectives, not just his own.

***

Media specificity is an important part of this dissertation as the artists are linked through their use of lens-based media, specifically photography and film. I focus on photographic representations of Lagos as artists "construct a point of view, a way of seeing which is underpinned by the authority of the literal."[36] The photographic medium mirrors reality in Lagos, while simultaneously crafting representations based on each artist's point of view. Nkanga's and Akinbiyi's still images reflect their personal, insider knowledge of the city, focusing on objects, locations, and situations important to them and recognizable to other Lagosians. However, their works also have a physical and temporal distance as both artists have lived and worked in Europe for over a decade prior to creating their projects. Koolhaas' perspective also reflects his view as a privileged European living in Amsterdam without prior knowledge of the city. Koolhaas' lifestyle enamored him to contingent, working-class ways of economic survival as new and innovative. Lagosians may have thought otherwise, since vendors or bus drivers were

---

[35] Ibid, 104-105.

[36] Liz Wells, *Land Matters* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011): 7.

focused on making a living. Together these images document and represent Lagos through differing perspectives, and incorporating aesthetic manipulation to produce a particular effect.

Photography has a long association with West Africa, dating to the mid-nineteenth century when the medium strengthened British imperial rule, and conversely, when West African studio photographers crafted self-empowering images of African elites. Through photographic manipulation, British explorers, governmental officials, and missionaries reinforced Western imagined preconceptions of "African" landscapes as impenetrable, primeval geographies in a state of barbarism.[37] On the other hand, Lagos-based studio photographers created images of sophisticated elites living in the port city.[38] The extreme disparity in British and Nigerian depictions demonstrates photography's contextual meaning. British colonials emphasized their superiority over "the natives," using stylistic conventions of black bodies in positions of servitude and contextualizing photographs as evidentiary truth. Lagosian elites used studio portraits to present themselves as educated and cosmopolitan.[39]

Photography's power is its ability to create meaning based on aesthetic conventions and context as argued by Scholar Allan Sekula who asserted that photographs could not be separated from culture or purpose. An image "present[ed] merely the *possibility* of meaning. Only its embeddedness in a concrete discourse

---

37 James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997): 30, 35-40.
38 Érika Nimis, *Photographes d'Afrique de l'Ouest: L'expérience Yoruba* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2005): 69-72.
39 Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, 11-14; Nimis, *Photographes d'Afrique de l'Ouest*, 69-70.

situation can the photograph yield a clear semantic outcome."[40] While the general public initially considered photographs as transparent documents of reality, Sekula argued that images have tasks based on their creation. Photography historian Susan Sontag similarly stated that photographs represent a form of reality related to particular tastes and conscience. Photographers regularly distorted or manipulated images, highlighting or erasing particular features, like a painter composing a scene.[41]

By focusing on photography, my dissertation highlights how *Tollgate to Ibadan #10, Untitled* [Woman in a striped dress walking across the sidewalk], and *Lagos/Koolhaas* represent Lagos from the perspective of transient Lagosian and non-national artists. The images reflect the local and international positionality of the creators, and their aesthetic interest in highly framed lens-based media. Photographs and films are not purely evidentiary or illustrative; they frame people and locations, emphasizing certain aspects while erasing others. For example, Koolhaas utilizes split screens and quick cuts heavily throughout *Lagos/Koolhaas*, heightening Lagos' overpopulation and keeping viewers' eyes constantly engaged. The effect is a feeling that the city offers too much visual stimulation at any one time. Koolhaas' editing strategies echo his attitudes towards Lagos and demonstrate how he wants his viewers to feel as well.

Photography of Lagos continues presently, although there is limited scholarship on the subject.[42] A generation of Nigerian photographers, born between 1930 and 1960

---

[40] Allan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," in *Thinking Photography*, Victor Burgin, ed. (London: Macmillion, 1982): 85-87.

[41] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Toronto: MaGraw-Hill, 1978): 5-6.

[42] Some scholarship on photography in Nigeria during the mid- to late-twentieth century includes: Erin Haney, *Photography and Africa* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010); Érika Nimis, *Photographes d'Afrique de l'Ouest: L'expérience Yoruba*; Érika Nimis, "The Rise of Nigerian Women in the Visual Media," *Visual*

captured images of Lagos and Lagosians, although they are only now gaining scholarly attention.[43] J.D. Okhai Ojeikere (1930-2014) was one of the most internationally recognized photographers of his generation. His *Hairstyle* series, beginning in the 1960s, gained him acclaim throughout Europe and the United States, including two monographs on his practice.[44] However, Ojeikere's oeuvre is not limited to one series; he has hundreds of images of Lagos architecture between 1955 and 1990.[45] Nevertheless, other photographers of Ojeikere's generation, such as Akinbiyi, have yet to receive such notice. By including Akinbiyi's work in this dissertation, my project brings attention to a broader generation of Nigerian photographers whose images require scholarly promotion.

As a female art historian, I also include Nkanga's work in my dissertation since female photographers warrant more attention. Nkanga is one of a growing number of Nigerian female artists working in photography exclusively or as part of a mixed media whose practice has recently gained local and international recognition through exhibitions

---

Anthropology 19, no. 5 (2006): 423-441; Érika Nimis, "Lagos, Nigeria: Capital of Photography," in *Ciel Variable*: *art, photo, medias, culture* 102 (2016): 47-55; John Peffer and Elisabeth Cameron, *Portraiture & Photography in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013)

43 A growing list of Lagos-based, Nigerian photographers working in the mid- to late-twentieth century include: J.D. Okhai Ojeikere (1930-2014), Peter Oyeyemi Obe (1932-2013), Sumni-Smart Cole (b. 1941), Tam Fiofori (b. 1940s), Akinbode Akinbiyi (b. 1944), Jide Adeniyi-Jones (b. 1952), and Don Barber (b. 1957).

44 Ojeikere's work is part of the permanent collections at MoMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Newark Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, as well as the Brooklyn Museum. His work is also in Walther Collection in Ulm, Germany and the Pigozzi Collection in Geneva, Switzerland. This is not a complete list of international collections that have acquired his work. There are also two monographs on Ojeikere's work: *J.D. Okhai Ojeikere: Photographs* (Paris: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, 2000) and *J.D. Okhai Ojeikere* (Lagos: CCA Lagos, 2015).

45 I visited Ojeikere's studio during April and May 2013. In looking at his archive of photographs, the artist had an album dedicated to architecture, with hundreds of images of Lagos between 1960 and 1980. Some of these images were exhibited in 2011 at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary in Helsinki, Finland and in 2015 at the National Museum of Mali as part of the 2015 Bamako African Photography Biennial.

and publications.[46] My dissertation continues the theme of highlighting African Diasporic women photographers, which I began in my undergraduate and graduate theses. African Diasporic women photographers deserve more rigorous attention than they currently receive, since there are dozens of established women photographers currently exhibiting. South African photographer Zanele Muholi (b. 1972) has become internationally recognized, with several solo exhibitions and publications;[47] however, mid-career Jamaican American photographer Renée Cox (b. 1960), another internationally acclaimed artist, has yet to have a monograph or retrospective. Furthermore, established British photographers Ingrid Pollard (b. 1953) and Zarina Bhimji (b. 1963) have yet to be seen in American museum exhibitions. Finally, I have not found any major scholarly publications specifically on African women photographers outside of artists' monographs, although scholars Deborah Willis, Carla Williams, and Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe have produced seminal publications on African-American female photographers.[48] Therefore my project's inclusion of an African woman photographer contributes to a current gap within photographic and African art histories.

***

[46] Nkanga does not consider herself a photographer, but an artist who uses photography. Other exhibiting Nigerian female photographers include Adeola Olagunji, Toyin Sokefun, Toyosi Zayna Odunsi, and Jumoke Sanwo.

[47] Some of Muholi's solo exhibitions included: *Faces and Phases* (Stevenson Gallery, 2009), *Like a Virgin* (CCA Lagos, 2009), *Zanele Muholi: Isibonelo/Evidence* (Brooklyn Museum, 2015); and her monographs are *Zanele Muholi: Only Half The Picture* (Johannesburg: Stevenson Gallery, 2006), *Zanele Muholi: Faces and Phases* (London: Prestel, 2010), and *Zanele Muholi: African Women Photographers*, Richardo Martinez Vázquez and Christian Peranzzone, (Barcelona: La Fábrica/Casa África, 2012).

[48] Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, *Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers* (New York: Writers & Readers Publishing, 1993); Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Deborah Willis, *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers, 1840 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000);

I focus on the theme of roadways as a site for transformation and adaptation using urban theorist Fassil Demissie's belief that "African cities [are] spaces where the inhabitants are reconfiguring and remaking urban worlds, deploying their own forms of urbanity born out of their historical and material circumstances."[49] Lagos' roads were part of British colonial segregation and postcolonial infrastructure,[50] as I discuss with Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in a striped dress walking across the sidewalk]. However, Lagosians often utilized those same spaces for public rituals and markets as ways of silent resistance. In Koolhaas' *Lagos/Koolhaas* sequences, roadways are for commerce between Victoria Island and the mainland. Lagos roads are where life happens and where people interact publicly and privately. Finally, Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* alludes to Lagos' major expressways as sites of car accidents, city enlargement, and spiritual crossroads. Roads are not merely for travel, but contribute to Lagos' numerous forms of remaking.

I place Nkanga's photograph in conversation with Nigerian authors Wole Soyinka and Ben Okri, who wrote plays and novels about spirits on human roads, highlighting how remaking is not purely on a physical or visible level. In Soyinka's play, *The Road* (1965), and Okri's novel, *The Famished Road* (1992), thoroughfares and paths take center stage as wary places because of the dangers from invisible but interfering spirits. Ogun, the Yoruba deity of iron and roads, features prominently in Soyinka's play, while Okri's represents roads as revered and respected spaces of sentience, engaging humanity and possibly causing harm. In connecting Nkanga's work with Yoruba mythology

---

[49] Ibid, 1.

[50] Bigon, *A History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals*, 52-29.

through Soyinka's and Okri's writings, I demonstrate seemingly banal, inanimate spaces as cosmically transitional. Lagosians practicing a traditional Yoruba religion interact with Lagos as both a living and non-living space, and Nkanga captures the animation of inert spaces, presenting an unconventional form of urban transformation. I want viewers to realize that roads can be sites of physical and spiritual travel as Nkanga's work showed me that urban spaces are not just passive structures, but full of life engaging with humanity.

Focusing on Lagos' roadways also highlights scholar Mbembe's argument of African cities as part of an "African modernity," or the "capacity to produce something new and singular, as yet unthought, and to find ways of accommodating this within our conceptual languages."[51] Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan* and Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in a striped dress walking across the sidewalk] illustrate that freeways can be sites for their intended use of travel, but also historical markers and spaces for Yoruba spirits. Mbembe emphasizes the importance of sociocultural perspective in demonstrating how a space can be multiple things simultaneously, depending on an individual's point of view. Scholar AdbouMaliq Simone gives a similar argument in his research on "informal economies" in African cities. Simone defines informal economies as non-state regulated economic systems.[52] He argues that these economies are part of a "frontier for a wide range of diffuse experimentation with the reconfiguration of bodies, territories, and social

---

[51] Achille Mbembe and Susan Nuttall, *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008): 9.

[52] AbdouMaliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004): 10.

arrangements necessary to recalibrate technologies of control."[53] Essentially, just because an economic system is not governmentally structured does not mean it cannot function properly or is not organized. Simone extends Mbembe's new "African modernity" into commerce. The roads in *Lagos/Koolhaas* highlight informal economies because of Koolhaas' fascination with Lagos' street vending as a method for economic survival. Local vendors appropriating roadways during commuting hours for consumerism is a local strategy of reconfiguration and resistance against the state's control of public space and another form of urban remaking.

The artists show Lagos repeatedly in transition due to its pre-colonial foundations and its colonial and post-colonial influences, demonstrating local, national, and international impacts. Akinbiyi, Nkanga and Koolhaas present Lagosians selectively, merging local and international traditions, technologies, architecture, and ideas together modifying urban spaces to fit individual and communal needs. I features artists whose work draws on the idea of "postcolonialism [as] neither western or non-Western but [as] a dialectal product of interaction between the two, articulating new counterpoints of insurgency from the long-running power struggles that pre-date and post-date colonialism."[54] Akinbiyi's and Nkanga's works represent internal histories and legacies through distanced points of view, critiquing current physical expansion, yet also highlighting Yoruba culture in an urban setting. Koolhaas' work is an example of Western fascination with African cities. His film praises contingent lifestyles in the city

---

53 Ibid, 2.

54 Robert Young, "Post-colonialism," in *Post-colonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001): 68.

as viewers watch Lagosians modifying their city to work best for them, not the other way around.

***

My close reading of photographic depictions of Lagos, investigating larger issues of postcolonial African cities, their histories, and daily life, places urban space as a growing theme within contemporary African photography and African art history. In taking a monographic approach by featuring one city, my analysis provides deep analysis and historical context of the same location by comparing Akinbiyi's, Koolhaas', and Nkanga's singular images. Artists living in Lagos see and experience its constant flows and shifts of expansion, gentrification, privatization, and forced ingenuity, all of which come through in their images. I am also able to examine each artist's aesthetic approach to the photographic medium, since all the work is lens-based. Furthermore, my research strives to stress representations of Lagos as a highly complex and nuanced city, one that is not purely wonderful or dangerous, but one that is both. The city can also be characterized as exhilarating, unwieldy, spiritual, and progressive. The images do not give a definitive answer, but they do present notions to contemplate or sights to interpret.

My approach and analysis contrasts earlier scholarship on African cities, which primarily comprise exhibition catalogues featuring dozens of artists representing numerous places as only one theme within many. The two major art photography projects on Lagos, *Africas: The Artist & The City* (2001) and *Century City: Art & Culture in the Modern Metropolis* (2001), increased awareness of Lagos to the international art world as a theme within modern and contemporary Nigerian art; however, they were more cursory

explorations than my own. Both exhibitions were expansive, including works by dozens of artists, and both compare Lagos to other cities, which did not allow for an in-depth formal analysis. In creating comparisons, each city focused on one idea, only capable of providing general chronological information and featuring only one artistic example.

In addition, European curators organized the exhibitions, using Paris as a comparative model to Lagos, marginalizing the latter, non-Western cities. Nigerian voices were utilized in *Century City*, since the essay on Lagos was written by Nigerian curators/artists Okwui Enwezor and Olu Oguibe, who discussed the city's "Golden Era" between 1955 and 1970.[55] In *Africas* curator Pep Subirós was the only voice, and his was highly pessimistic since he was writing from an outsider perspective with no prior knowledge of Lagos. In Subirós' case, the city is understood as a dangerous place that one is lucky to survive in.[56] While both exhibitions are not incorrect in their representations, again, these are only two examples among several that repeat conceptions of Lagos as chaotic and dangerous.[57] However, as I discuss in my work on Akinbiyi's, Nkanga's and Koolhaas' photographs and films, these are not the only representations. My three case studies are counterpoints to these aforementioned publications and projects; none is more true or more false, and none is definitive.

---

55 Iwona Blazwick, *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis* (London: Tate, 2001): 41-56.

56 Pep Subirós, *Africas: The Artist and the City, A Journey and an Exhibition* (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, 2001): 45.

57 Enwezor also published *Under Siege: Four African Cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos* in 2005 as part of a series of talks on democracy, social and religious difference, and new spatial arrangements. The title and tone of the publication suggests that Lagos and other similar post-colonial African cities have a pessimistic future, perpetuating a Western academic and general public belief that these places are continuously unraveling, reformulating and improvising. Okwui Enwezor, *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography* (Göttingen, Germany: STEIDL, 2006): 35.

My dissertation also provides visual analysis for the growing body of historical monographs on Lagos, which only used photographs for evidence or context. In conducting formal investigations on images, my scholarship demonstrates that imagery is interpretive, yet it also imparts as much crucial information as facts and statistics. A number of books have examined Lagos during its pre-colonial, colonial, and immediate post-colonial period, and these included paintings and photographs: *Building Lagos* (1977), *The Lagos Consulate, 1851-1861* (1979), *Lagos: The City is the People* (1991), *Lagos: A City at Work* (2005), *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900* (2007), *Sandbank City: Lagos at 150* (2012), and *Lagos: A Cultural and Historical Companion* (2012);[58] yet none of these works is given the close examination that I conducted, and many photographs are not even explained beyond a descriptive sentence. The images in my study give readers the cultural, social, and political context, not the other way around.

---

[58] This list is not comprehensive since there are additional books investigating certain aspects of Lagos history.
Tunde Agbola, *The Architecture of Fear: Urban Design and Construction Response to Urban Violence in Lagos, Nigeria* (Ibadan: IFRA, 1997); E.A. Ajayi, R.O. Ajetunmobi, and S.A. Akindele, eds., *History of the Awori of Lagos State* (Lagos: Adenrian Ogunsanya College of Education, 1998); Pauline Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change: The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); Kunle Akinsemoyin and Alan Vaughan-Richards, *Building Lagos* (Lagos: Prestige Books, 2009); Patrick Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Elizabeth Cox and Erica Anderssen, *Survive Lagos* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1984); Michael Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of the Nineteenth Century Lagos Life* (London: Macmillan, 1977); John Godwin and Gillian Hopwood, *Sandbank City: Lagos at 150* (Lagos: Prestige Books, 2012); John Losi, *History of Lagos* (Lagos: African Education Press, 1967); Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change the Educated Class in Colonial Lagos* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City, 1760-1900* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2007); Peter Marris, *Family and Social Change in an Africa City: A Study of Rehousing in Lagos* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1962); Rina Okonkwo, *Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1995); Agboola Onikoyi, *History of Lagos* (Lagos: Toklast Press Limited, 1975); Margaret Peil, *Lagos: The City is the People* (London: Belhaven, 1991); Robert Smith, *Lagos Consulate, 1851-1861* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Kaye Whiteman, *Lagos: A Cultural and Historical Companion* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2012).

My monographic approach borrows from scholar Jane Tormey's discussion about the "photography *of* the city," which she outlines in *Cities and Photography* (2013).[59] Tormey gives a history of photographs of urban spaces around the world during the late nineteenth to early twenty-first centuries. She notes that the "photography *of* the city" is a visual documentation of the city, ranging from social agency posters to fine art.[60] Although Tormey writes about numerous international cities, I feature only one, but I align with her belief that images of a city tell a story, but not the only story or the whole story. An appropriate example from her book is South African photographer Guy Tilliam's (b. 1962) *Jo'Burg* series, featuring the Hillbrow neighborhood in the early 2000s. Hillbrow was a former white middle-class area during apartheid, but afterwards, "white flight" occurred, and the neighborhood was repopulated with working-class blacks. Unfortunately, public services also left, forcing new tenants to engineer basic services.[61] Tilliam lived in HIllbrow for five months photographing families and their daily lives. The images feature bare-foot children living in apartments without running water and broken windows. However, those images tell a story of one community, within the entirety of Johannesburg, framed by one artist. Tilliam did not photograph middle-class blacks communities, or the city's Indian communities, or whites living in gated suburbs. Tilliam's story, although incomplete, adds to the overall multi-layered history of Johannesburg.

---

[59] Jane Tormey, *Cities and Photography* (New York: Routledge, 2013): 58.
[60] Ibid, 58.
[61] Ibid, 142-48.

My analysis on Akinbiyi's, Nkanga's, and Koolhaas' Lagos images affirm none of the artists' depictions as representing a complete story. No person's representation is the truth, because any place, person, or event can be interpreted differently. *Untitled* [Woman in a striped dress walking across the sidewalk] emphasizes Broad Street's legacy in Lagos' historical organization and its symbolism in contemporary international business. *Tollgate to Ibadan #10*'s represents the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway as a physical and spiritual crossroads, suggesting Lagos is more than a megacity, but a sacred space for invisible divinities. Finally, *Lagos/Koolhaas'* footage of street vendors underscores individuals lacking resources finding ways of economic independence by readapting space. These three works represent aspects of Lagos life, but not wholly, since there are too many neighborhoods and people whose stories are unknown. By comparing three different images, I offer not one Lagos, but multiple representations based on each artist's personal engagement with the city. Yet, Akinbiyi's, Nkanga's, and Koolhaas' images of Lagos tell a part of a larger, ongoing, complex history that cannot be conveyed as a small part of an exhibition catalogue.

***

I developed an interest in photographic representations of Lagos from my scholarly curiosity in landscape photography and urban settings. My master's thesis examined British photographers Ingrid Pollard and Zarina Bhimji, who, as black and Asian artists, used their images of the English countryside and London's immigrant community to redefine the relationship between Britishness and Englishness. I was

fascinated by the way a person could define herself or himself through a physical and conceptual landscape, whether a cityscape, rural-scape, a region, or even a nation.

As a born and bred Chicagoan, I have lived in numerous cities across the United States; however, I am tied to my identity as an urban Midwesterner. Having grown up in Chicago and its suburbs, I understand the city in a way non-Chicagoans do not. I would not represent the city through a tourist photograph of Anish Kapoor's outdoor sculpture *Cloud Gate* (2006) in Millennium Park, but by the waterfront in the predominately African-American neighborhood of Hyde Park, where my parents took me to art fairs as a child. Those nostalgic memories connect me with my privileged perception of Chicago, one that does not include the city's repeated association with gangs, murder, and gun violence. I know that Lagos, a city thousands of miles away, is similarly a place full of millions of people, young and old. Lagosians have their own stories to tell about their city and their own versions of the way they would depict it. My research on Lagos gives just a few examples of the millions of stories and points of view that could be told.

Chapter One focuses on *Untitled* [Woman in a striped dress walking across the sidewalk] (1995), one image from Akinbiyi's *All Roads*. His image of pedestrians on Broad Street shows the city's physical transformation through the destruction of historical architectural styles and informal housing to make way for luxury construction of private residences and international corporate headquarters. I discuss how the images trace the city's previous spatial shifts, including symbols of Brazilian repatriated communities and colonial British governmental elite. I also discuss how current

transitions through "urban renewal projects" for wealthy citizens displace many long-standing working-class communities.

Yoruba belief in the physical and metaphysical crossroads is the center of Nkanga's work in Chapter Two. I discuss *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* (2001) as an image of Lagos' developing periphery and a space of potential death through public transportation and spiritual involvement. Although the image is based on a personal tragedy of the death of the artist's mother, Nkanga is not making a direct connection to her biography, but to road accidents throughout Lagos. I argue that her photographic manipulation creates an ethereal quality, heightening an association with spirits in Yoruba religious practices. I also discuss the image's allusion to Lagos' physical expansion into the interior, into rural areas where migrants without economic resources find available land to build homes. The city is at the crossroads of urban development as it grows beyond its original city and state borders daily.

Chapter Three considers an outsider's perspective on Lagos through the film *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001) as Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas represents contingent lifestyles within the city. I examine Koolhaas' fascination with working-class migrants and locals working as street vendors throughout the city. I argue that Koolhaas finds contingent Lagosian lifestyles innovative, despite the fact that those same individuals would disagree. His highly edited footage amplifies the presence of street vendors, projecting his perspective onto viewers. Through film cuts, split screens, voiceovers, and music, viewers watch Koolhaas explore Lagos and its citizens finding ways to survive by creating alternative uses for public spaces, due to the lack of access to public resources.

While these three lens-based representations of Lagos are by no means the only ones available, nor are they the most dominant ones, they are still windows into a changing city.

AKINBODE AKINBIYI

Nigerian photographer Akinbode Akinbiyi's (b. 1940) was raised in a middle-class family in Lagos until he began his university studies in Germany in the early 1970s. Though he studied literature, Akinbiyi began his career in photography as a hobby learning from his friend and fellow photographer Jide Adeniyi-Jones. After realizing visual imagery better represented his perspective Akinbiyi embarked on an ongoing profession in artistic photography.[62] His series *All Roads* represents physical traces of historic and contemporary transformations in Lagos' public spaces. His photographs of seemingly ordinary public roads expose hidden histories and meanings known to long-term Lagosians. The artist features Lagos' core highways and commercial streets between 1990 and 1995, which are embedded with significance for the Yoruba community, the city's largest ethnicity.

Akinbiyi highlights Lagos' roads as silent witnesses to the city's development over the past century. Streets are often sights of repeated transition as buildings along them are constructed or destroyed, or as working classes are displaced because an area has become gentrified for governmental and commercial redevelopment efforts. In his 1995 photograph *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] (fig. 1.1) Akinbiyi presents Lagos' colonial and post-colonial history through one such street, and he focuses on its multiplicity of use. The highway bringing redevelopment efforts into a

[62] Interview with Akinbiyi Akinbode, Lagos, Nigeria, May 20, 2013.

working-class neighborhood may be the same space leading to the destruction of that community.

Akinbiyi began photographing Lagos' public spaces after he and fellow Nigerian photographer Jide Adeniyi-Jones had documented the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Lagos in January 1977. He had photographed festival events and FESTAC's impact on Lagos' architecture and spatial organization.[63] Akinbiyi was raised in Lagos and witnessed the city's growth prior to, during, and immediately after Independence in 1960. He, therefore, had a vested interest in what FESTAC meant to Lagos and Nigerians generally. The eyes of the world were looking at Nigeria, particularly Lagos, since it was hosting thousands of international artists, cultural practitioners, and government leaders. The national government spent millions of dollars starting in 1970 when it agreed to host the event. Due to economic surpluses from oil revenues, FESTAC became an enormous spectacle with the construction of the now iconic National Theatre and FESTAC Town for the festivities.[64]

Akinbiyi returned to Lagos for FESTAC from Germany, where he was a doctoral student in world literature at the University of Heidelberg. To him, Lagos was not the same city he knew as a child. He noticed new large, high-rise developments being constructed and older buildings gone. He started documenting this "new Lagos," which was spatially and psychologically different from what he remembered.[65] Akinbiyi

---

[63] Interview with Akinbiyi Akinbode, Lagos, Nigeria, May 20, 2013.

[64] Iris Kay, "FESTAC 77," *African Arts* 11, no. 1 (October 1977): 51; Andrew Apter, "FESTAC for Black People: Oil Capitalism and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria," *MPublishing, University of Michigan Library Passage* (1993), accessed June 13, 2016: http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4761530.0006.002.

[65] Interview with Akinbiyi Akinbode, Lagos, Nigeria, May 21, 2013.

returned to Germany after FESTAC with images that he sold to German newspapers, magazines, and journals, which were unable to send their own photographers.[66] He also realized that photography was a better form of self-expression than writing and that he could make a decent living as a professional photographer. Instead of continuing his academic studies, Akinbiyi began pursuing his artistic training full-time.[67]

In his search for a non-existent Lagos, Akinbiyi locates historical traces in architectural remnants or the utilization of space. The photographer stated: "I am looking for my childhood, that kind of innocence and childlikeness that I had grown up in… Lagos, and which I feel is no longer there. Whenever I find such moments – fragments of this lost innocence – I take photographs."[68] While the artist's images reflect his perception of Lagos, the photographs go beyond a nostalgic search for his past. They are an important example of Lagosian empowerment, creating localized forms of self-representation for Akinbiyi's generation and acting as crucial visual resources for younger Lagosians. Although buildings or spaces come and go, his images of roads present markers of times past and indexes of previous periods.

This chapter conducts a close reading of Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] (1995).[69] The photograph represents a major commercial street, with different forms of architecture, and pedestrians as palimpsests of

---

[66] The artist does not remember the specific names of the publications where he sold his FESTAC images. Akinbode Akinbiyi, Lagos interview, May 21, 2013.

[67] Akinbode Akinbiyi, phone interview, June 8, 2015.

[68] Mariam Daepp, "Five Questions for Akinbode Akinbiyi," published online on Goethe-Institut South Africa (April 2013), accessed August 2015: http://www.geothe.de/ins/za/en/joh/kul/mag/fra/108174718.html.

[69] Akinbiyi does not give titles to his images; they are all untitled. I am therefore using descriptive titles to differentiate them.

Lagos' physical and metaphorical shifts since the nineteenth century. Through the photograph, a viewer learns of the city's history of colonial segregation, its various ethnic communities, the relationship between architecture and sociopolitical power in the early- to mid-twentieth century, changes in Yoruba fashion, and Lagos' late-twentieth century corporatization. The image also references ongoing twentieth century displacements of working-class communities in Lagos. *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] reflects on over a century of physical and sociocultural transformations within Lagos by its inhabitants, shown from a local perspective.

I read Akinbiyi's image through anthropologist Adeline Masquelier's theory on road mythology. She argues that roads are unconventional markers of communal memory and spaces of duality.[70] Masquelier bases her theory on the construction of Route Nacionale 1 in Niger and its legacy on the Mawri people. The French colonial government created the highway in order to access and extract raw materials from Niger's interior for export to France. The Mawri people were forcibly conscripted for road construction, and thousands of them died due to the difficult working conditions. Furthermore, sacred natural shrines were destroyed to create a direct route. Today, Route Nacionale 1 remains the region's main artery, taking citizens from the interior to coastal cities for jobs, but the Mawri people also fear it, believing that earlier destruction of sacred shrines caused spirits to roam freely along the highway, causing deaths through road accidents.[71] Route Nacionale 1 is a double-edge sword, bringing modernization, but

---

[70] Adeline Masquelier, "Road Mythologies: Space, Mobility, and the Historical Imagination in Post-colonial Niger," *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4 (2002): 829-30.
[71] Ibid, 830-31.

also spiritual destruction and human death. Akinbiyi's image mirrors Masquelier's theory by representing multi-layered narratives of Lagos' roads as symbolic of recurring development over time and its impact on Lagosians.

Akinbiyi began his *All Roads* series in 1980, organizing his Lagos images together into an ongoing project. The photographer then expanded the series to other cities throughout the African continent, including Johannesburg, South Africa, Cairo, Egypt, Dakar, Senegal, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Nairobi, Kenya, and Lubumbashi and Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Although I only investigate a singular image from Lagos, Akinbiyi's *All Roads* features scenes throughout Nigeria's largest city and each of the aforementioned locations. With every return journey, the photographer finds a new area to explore or an alteration to a previously-visited area. Akinbiyi revisits cities in order to capture the complexity of spatial shifts and remaining markers throughout urbanized Africa.

The series title, *All Roads*, takes its name from the proverb, "All roads lead to Rome." This well-known phrase refers to the idea that "all paths or activities lead to the center of things."[72] In its original context, all roads within the Roman Empire led directly from and into Rome, the seat of the Empire's power. Similarly, though no longer the seat of Nigerian political power, Lagos is still the economic capital. The title further suggests that roadways are integral to Akinbiyi's project, as all scenes take place along roads and highways. However, rather than presenting roads as a path to a journey's end, Akinbiyi's images show the space where journeys take place and the type of encounters a traveler

[72] E. D. Hirsch, Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil, *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1993): 48.

may see along the way. Those encounters also stress roadways' dual nature, bringing both benefits and devastation to local communities.

Lagos' History through Broad Street

Untitled [Woman in striped dress walking across sidewalk] (fig. 2.1) is a black-and-white photograph of an urban street scene in Lagos Island. In the foreground, a young, dark-skinned woman walks across a patterned sidewalk wearing a matching striped top and skirt with open-toed sandals. She looks off into the distance, her face in profile, turned away from the camera. The photographer has caught her in mid-step, her arms in motion, purposeful and high against her waist. In the mid-ground, a wide paved street separates the central figure from the action behind her. A cab stops at the left edge of the frame, with the passenger door open; either it is letting a person out or receiving a new fare. In the background, along the edges of the frame, are two clusters of black-skinned pedestrians. Some of the figures wear Western dress, while others wear traditional garb and carry objects on their head. The pedestrians walk towards the center of the frame and the edges on their way to an unknown destination.

Along the upper portion of the photograph, covering the entire background, are five buildings next to each other. Three of the buildings are multistory and two are single-story, although only one of the multistory facades is completely visible. Cut off by the frames two hi-rise buildings are only partially visible, but they are all distinctly different from each other. The center structure is older, which is obvious from the staining above the ground floor windows. The edifice directly to the left seems to be covered in shutters, an unconventional style for the late twentieth century, especially in a major city.

Moreover, directly on the right side are two bungalow-style buildings with stained roofs, another architectural form not traditionally seen in large cities. One may recognize the structure on the right edge of the frame as an example of corporate architecture. It is a high-rise building, full of glass windows in an angular pattern, reflecting the sunlight.

Akinbiyi's image reveals Lagos' entire urban development since the nineteenth century through a visual history of one of its most prominent thoroughfares, Broad Street. Not only do the various architectural styles reflect the social, political, and economic situations and mindsets from three different generations, but the pedestrians also reflect fluctuating trends and tastes in wearing tailored-made *Ankara* (printed wax cloth) fashions and head wraps or Western-style jeans and dresses. The scene reveals how through one street a viewer can learn about Lagos' history from the pre-colonial period to the dawn of the twenty-first century.

The architecture in *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across sidewalk] identifies the particular Lagos road where the scene is located. The mostly cut off building on the frame's left side is covered with window shutters known as sun breakers.[73] They were a distinctive design feature in a mid-twentieth-century architectural style known as Tropical Modernism, although sun breakers only covered the front façade of the Allen and Hansbury House, the Lagos corporate headquarters of the British pharmaceutical company (fig. 1.2). It was built in 1958 on Broad Street by the British

[73] Sun breakers were shading devices for buildings to blocks the sunrays and regulate temperature. Mahmoud Gadelhak, Mohaned Aly, and Hanan Sabry, "High Performance Facades: The Effect of Sun Breakers on Daylighting Performance and Energy Consumption in South Oriented Office Spaces," in Proceedings of the Architectural Engineering Institute (AEI) Conference, State College, Pennsylvania, 2013: 777.

expatriate architectural team John Godwin and Gillian Hopwood.[74] Tropical Modernism was a style promoted by Nigeria's newly elected independent government in the 1960s as a visual way to promote the country's industrial modernization.[75]

Allen and Hansbury House represented a new, modern, independent Lagos and Nigeria during the mid-twentieth century. Tropical Modernism supposedly did not "bear the mark of a colonizing power."[76] Its most distinctive features, beyond being multistory and utilizing sun breakers, were its minimalist design and its specific "international" materials (steel, concrete, and metal).[77] The newly elected Nigerian government championed Tropical Modernism by constructing government buildings in this style, stating that it projected an international vision of Lagos and a new national identity for Nigeria.[78] This new architecture contrasted with the wood and whitewashed bungalows with wide verandahs, baroque ornaments, and classical columns that so characterized British colonial homes and government buildings of the previous century.

Godwin and Hopwood, the building's architects, were one set of British architects who designed and built urban campuses and edifices throughout Nigeria. They also wrote

---

74 Hannah Le Roux, "The Networks of Tropical Architecture," *Journal of Architecture* 8, no. 3 (January 2003): 345-47.

75 Daniel Immerwahr, "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Postcolonial Lagos, 1960-86," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 19, no. 2 (2007): 166-67.

75 The sun breakers were levers that allowed for natural ventilation and to control solar radiation within Lagos' tropical climate. Hannah Le Roux, "The Networks of Tropical Architecture," 346-47.

76 Daniel Immerwahr, "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Postcolonial Lagos, 1960-86," 166.

77 Hannah Le Roux, "The Networks of Tropical Architecture," 345.

78 Max Frey and Jane Drew wrote *Tropical Architecture in the Humid Zones* in 1956 and *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones* in 1964 and designed several buildings at the University of Ibadan (1951-55), German architect Otto Koenigsberger edited Architectural Design editions in October 1953 and January 1954. Alan Vaughn-Richards was another British architect based in Lagos who worked on several projects, such as the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (1968) and the Bristol Hotel (date unknown). Daniel Immerwahr, "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Post-colonial Lagos, 1960-1986," 167.

articles and books discussing Tropical Modernism's importance in international architecture.[79] The style was "an architectural idiom developed shortly after the Second World War by architects building in British West Africa... [and] adapted for warmer climates from the International Style associated with Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Walter Gropius."[80] Despite the belief that Tropical Modernism was a hybrid architectural style with roots in West Africa, it originated in Europe and incorporated imported materials.

Akinbiyi includes an example of Tropical Modernism in the photograph because it was the style that he saw being constructed around Lagos as a young man. He was approximately eighteen years old when the Allen and Hansbury House was completed. Similar modernist edifices were built in the city throughout the 1950s,[81] rapidly changing the physical look and emotional feel of Lagos. Although the structures were supposed to reflect an international, modern and cosmopolitan Lagos when constructed, Akinbiyi cuts off the Allen and Hansbury House drastically in the image, as if it is no longer relevant or

---

[79] For more on Tropical Modernism and modernist architecture throughout West Africa, see Stephanie Decker, "Solid Intentions: An Archival Ethnography of Corporate Architecture and Organizational Remembering," *Organization* 21, no. 4 (2014): 522-36; Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones* (New York: Robert Krieger Publishing Company, 1964); Daniel Immerwahr, "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Postcolonial Lagos, 1960-86," Hannah Le Roux, "The Networks of Tropical Architecture," Hannah Le Roux, "Building on the Boundary: Modern Architecture in the Tropics" *Social Identities* 10, no. 4 (2004): 439-53; Hannah Le Roux, "Modern Architecture in Post-Colonial Ghana and Nigeria," *Architectural History* 47 (2004): 361-92; D. J. Vickery, "Contemporary Nigerian Architecture" and "Modern Architecture in Lagos," *Nigeria Magazine*, no. 73 (1962): 44-62; Patrick Wakely, "The Development of a School: An Account of the Department of Development and Tropical Studies of the Architectural Association," *Habitat International* 7, no. 56 (1983) 337-46; and Ola Uduku, "Modernist Architecture and 'The Tropical' in West Africa: The Tropical Architecture Movement in West Africa, 1948-1970," *Habitat International* 3, no. 3 (2006): 396-411.

[80] Daniel Immerwahr, "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Post-colonial Lagos, 1960-1986," 167.

[81] Shell Company created a modernist headquarters by the Marina in 1945, and throughout the 1950s, the United States Embassy, Bristol Hotel and BP headquarters were all constructed in a modernist style. Kunle Akinsemoyin and Alan Vaughan-Richards, *Building Lagos*, 59-62.

as if its time has passed. Akinbiyi's aesthetic choice may be due to the irony that, although Tropical Modernism was touted as a hybrid of West African and European styles, it was only a part of the different ethnic complexities found in Lagos.

The Allen and Hansbury House in *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across sidewalk] identifies Akinbiyi's image as Broad Street, however, the center structure connects the street to mid-nineteenth century Lagos. The fully visible, central structure is an example of Brazilian architecture, prominent in Lagos throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[82] (fig. 1.3) Between 1820 and 1899, over 8,000 freed black people emigrated from Brazil to Lagos pursuing economic dreams in or near their ancestral homeland. The returnees were predominately Yoruba descendants, 3/5 African-born and 2/5 Brazilian-born.[83] By 1889 an estimated 5,000 Brazilians were living in Lagos.[84] During the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, millions of West Africans were sent from ports in Nigeria and Benin to Brazil. Brazil's close proximity to Lagos made it a preferred location by slave traders, and the West African-born freedmen and women preferred to return there to continue a cultural allegiance and familial relationship.[85] Furthermore, enslaved peoples in Brazil could buy their freedom far easier than in other countries, and the relatively nearby distance made Lagos a logical destination. Those

---

82 For images and examples of colonial and Brazilian architecture, see Kunle Akinsemoyin and Alan Vaughan-Richards, *Building Lagos*, 16-22.

83 Lisa Lindsay, "To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos," 22-23.

84 There is no current numbers of Brazilian descendants living in Lagos, although numerous Nigerians have Portuguese last names. Ibid, 27.

85 Silke Stickrodt, "The Brazilian Diaspora to West African in the Nineteenth Century," in *AfricAmericas: Itineraries, Dialogues and Sounds*, ed. Ineke Phat and Tiago de Oliveria Pinto (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008): 44-46.

without family ties still believed that their children would have better socioeconomic opportunities in Nigeria than in Brazil.[86]

Lagos' Yoruba people treated Brazilians with antipathy, sometimes threatening their property and even their freed status. However, this reaction was due to many Brazilians participating in slave trading after settling in Lagos. Colonial administrators and missionaries treated Brazilians better, since they were Christian, lived in European style homes, and preferred to educate their children in Western traditions.[87] Brazilians relied on their adopted culture once established in Lagos. They created a community based on a shared Portuguese language, Catholic religion, architectural style, and a hybrid culture of European and modified Yoruba traditions.

Akinbiyi references Lagos' historical Brazilian community by emphasizing an example of a wealthy family's home in the scene. Although it is deteriorating, the central structure is still present into the late twentieth century, when Akinbiyi took his photograph. Brazilian architecture was a distinctive, visual marker for Lagos' Brazilian community as many returnees were skilled carpenters and ironworkers, who built homes with ornate ironwork designs.[88] Homes ranged from one-story bungalows to two- and three-story buildings made of wood, stucco, and brick with the exterior walls whitewashed and ornate ironwork gates.[89] Middle-class families owned multi-story

---

86 Ibid, 46-47.

87 Richard Ralson, "The Return of Brazilian Freedman to West Africa in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1969): 586-89.

88 Lisa Lindsay, "To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos," 29-35.

89 Very few examples of Brazilian-style architecture still exist in Lagos, although there have been past efforts to preserve certain well-known buildings. See John Godwin and Gilliam Hopwood, *Sandbank City: Lagos at 150*, 140.

buildings, using the main floor for commercial ventures and upper floors as residences. Architecture also demonstrated feelings of superiority against indigenes since Brazilian homes were costly and similar to British colonial architecture.[90]

The Brazilian style was so popular that it influenced local Yoruba architecture in Lagos and other Nigerian cities. Akinbiyi references Lagos' working-class Brazilian-Nigerian architecture, colloquially known as "face me-face you" in the bungalow homes, in *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across sidewalk]. The two structures are barely visible on the right side of the frame due to their low heights in relation to the buildings surrounding them and the pedestrians walking in front of them. The bungalows are most likely for commercial purposes, probably corner stores, since the other buildings are businesses with signage above the front door.

Brazilian-Nigerian bungalows were for Yoruba who wanted the more ornate design of a Brazilian home but could not afford a two-story house. Traditional Yoruba homes were large compounds intended for extended, polygamous families. However, once Christianity was firmly entrenched in Yoruba society, families began to build homes for immediate family members only. Wanting to demonstrate their wealth Yoruba, elite built Brazilian-style homes because of the expense, but also to reject British colonialism. Those without major funds built one-story versions, which were later converted to

[90] Cordelia Osasona, "From Traditional Residential Architecture to the Vernacular: The Nigerian Experience," accessed June 13, 2016: http:www.mudoline.org/aat/2007_documents/AAT_Osasona (2007): 6-9.

communal style living. Each room housed a family, with a shared interior courtyard, kitchen, and bathroom.[91]

Brazilian architecture is gone in most of Lagos, with the exception of crumbling "face me-face you" homes. The buildings were too expensive for families to maintain over generations and were destroyed for new modernist developments.[92]Akinbiyi's image captures this lost history in these structures. Similar to the Allen and Hansbury House, Akinbiyi would have witnessed Brazilian buildings being destroyed, changing Lagos' look and losing an important piece of the city's communal past. In capturing this image of Broad Street, Akinbiyi presents an aspect of the Lagos that he remembers from his childhood, one now only visible in remnants.

Finally, the photographer highlights Lagos as part of a global twentieth century through his inclusion of the contemporary skyscraper on the frames' far right. While the other buildings feature Lagos past, this final building brings viewer to the present and future. The building is the headquarters for Nigerian-owned Savannah Bank. Skyscrapers as depicted in Akinbiyi's photograph represent Lagos as cosmopolitan, with international financial connections, similar to other global cities, such as New York, London, Paris, Dubai, and Tokyo.

---

[91] Ibid, 11-12; John Michael Vlach, "The Brazilian House in Nigeria: The Emergence of a 20th century Vernacular House Type," *The Journal of American Folklore* 97, no. 383 (Jan-Mar 1984): 14-18.

[92] For images of Brazilian and colonial architecture in Lagos, see "Old Lagos," *Nigeria Magazine*, no. 38 (1952): 122-29. For more on this style of architecture, see L. C. Lelard, "Lagos in Portugal and Lagos in Nigeria," *Nigeria Magazine,* no. 39 (1952): 257-60; John Goodwin, "Lagos Views," *Nigeria Magazine*, no. 61 (1959): 92-103; John Michael Vlach, "The Brazilian House in Nigeria: The Emergence of a 20th-Century Vernacular House Type," 3-23; Lisa Lindsay, "To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos," Nkiru Nzegwu, "Bypassing New York in Re-Presenting Eko: Production of Space in a Nigerian City," in *Re-Presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the Twenty-First Century Metropolis*, ed. Anthony D. King (New York: NYU Press, 1996): 111-36.

In addition, with the building known as a bank, Akinbiyi's photograph situates Lagos as a player in contemporary international economy. Banks play a central role in national and international markets and "are catalyst agents in the development process of the economy."[93] Banking is a major part of Nigeria's economy, employing thousands of employees and increasing national GDP.[94] Savannah Bank was founded in 1960, the same year of Nigerian Independence.[95] As a newly independent nation Nigeria needed its own banks to compete on an international scale and to be part of the country's nationhood. Although the building is a more recent example of corporate architecture, the Savannah Bank brand is connected with a euphoric period in Nigeria's history, when citizens were free to work where they wanted. The edifice itself visually communicates the organization that it houses as an institution with longevity that will continue into the future, again linking Lagos' past and present. Savannah Bank's presence in the image is a symbol of Nigeria's growing wealth and its position as a participant within global capitalism into the twenty-first century.

The edifice is a steel and glass structure, like so many others that are found presently in many major cities. It represents the company and the city as strong and sharp. "What counts today is as much the *appearance* of an organization – and thus its

---

[93] S.O. Popoola, "Scanning the Environment for Competitive Advantage: A Study of Corporate Banking Managers in Nigeria," *Libri* 50, no. 3 (2000): 210.

[94] Sanusi L. Sanusi, "Banking Reform and its Impact on the Nigerian Economy," *CBN Journal of Applied Statistics* 2, no. 2 (2012): 120-121.

[95] "Company Overview of Savannah Bank of Nigeria PLC" Accessed July 18, 2006: www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=20412187

credibility – as its performance."[96] Contemporary consumers have more confidence in sleek and well-designed corporations than one in a dilapidated structure. Donald McNeill states that skyscrapers are part of an increasingly "global architecture" and "reflect the logic of the free market or transnational capitalism."[97] Corporate buildings are "icons of modernity, collectively form[ing] a scenographic backdrop that defines a city's identity, and usually involv[ing] the clearance of older less profitable, land uses."[98] Its location on Broad Street demonstrates the area's cyclical transitions, shifting through the demolition of older structures similar to the ones next to it. Together, these buildings not only give a history of Broad Street, but of Lagos in general, as they each represent a different time period, starting over a century ago. They also represent the different ethnic groups that have called the city home.

Akinbiyi's representation of Broad Street, and the aforementioned structures on it, as a site calls attention to Lagos' evolution from a Yoruba-dominated port city into a contemporary "megacity." Although in the image the viewer may only see a wide piece of asphalt, its central presence in the photograph alludes to its importance. It is a silent, but permanent, fixture within Lagos. Although people and structures may change along it, Broad Street remains as it has done so for over 150 years.

---

[96] Olof Berg and Kristian Kreiner, 'Corporate Architecture: Turning Physical Settings into Symbolic Resources," in *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*, Pasquale Gagliardi, ed. (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1990): 43. The italics are my own.

[97] Donald McNeill. *The Global Architect: Firms, Fame and Urban Form* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 2.

[98] Ibid: 114.

Broad Street was the second street constructed in the city, built in 1863, directly after the British annexed Lagos in 1861.[99] As the French colonial government was responsible for Route Nacionale 1 in Niger, the British colonial government created Broad Street. It was constructed under Governor John Hawley Glover (1863-72);[100] it ran parallel to the waterfront, in an area known as "the Marina." Broad Street received its name because of its size, which was also part of its purpose. It was a physical barrier segregating the city along racial and ethnic lines, a preventative measure against fires, and an attempt to replicate urban design found in London.[101]

During Glover's rule, Broad Street was "unofficially" segregated into four major ethnic districts. Lagos comprised the five-square-kilometer Lagos Island, and its inhabitants populated about one-third of its land.[102] The Yoruba community lived in Isale Eko. Eko, meaning war camp, is an adaptation of the island's original Yoruba name Oko, meaning farm.[103] Isale Eko was the first occupied part of the island due to its high

---

[99] Liora Bigon, "Sanitation and Street Layout in Early Colonial Lagos: British and Indigenous Conceptions, 1851-1900," *Planning Perspectives* 20 (2005): 255.

[100] Bigon, "Sanitation and Street Layout in Early Colonial Lagos," 254-55.

[101] Scholar Liora Bigon suggested that "the laying of the early streets in Lagos Island was symbolically conceived by the Saro [Sierra Leonian] community as embodying 'civilizing' aspects and evoked a great enthusiasm." Although creating straight streets was not an exact replication, the spaces gave the idea of an urban environment that Europeans were used to. Bigon, "Sanitation and Street Layout in Early Colonial Lagos," 254.

[102] Europeans were fearful of malaria, and believed the local population was carriers so make sure to live away from them. However, Governor Macgregor (1899-1904) opposed the idea of a formal racial segregation because he believed that it would create racial animosity. However, despite Macgregor's desires, there was a principle of segregation on the statute books in 1902. Moreover, it seems that the major ethnic communities in Lagos self-segregated based on language, religion and culture. Ayodeji Okukoju, "The Segregation of Europeans and Africans in Colonial Nigeria," in *Security, Crime and Segregation in West African Cities since the 19th Century*, Laurent Fourchard and Isaac Olawale Albert, eds. Paris: Kartala (2003): 264-65.

[103] A.B. Aderibigbe, "Early History of Lagos to About 1850," in *Lagos: The Development of an African City*, A. B. Aderbigbe, ed. (Lagos, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria, 1975): 3-5; Nikru Nzwgwu, "Bypassing New York in Re-Presenting Eko: Production of Space in a Nigerian City," 116.

elevation and its unlikeness to flood. Yoruba houses were plant-based walled compounds with a series of rooms surrounding a shared open courtyard (fig. 1.6) covered with thatched roofs.[104] In between compounds were narrow footpaths for travel. Unfortunately, the close proximity of those dwellings inevitably spread forty major fires between 1859 and 1892.[105] Glover used government funds to build Broad Street and the Marina as "a preliminary step in protecting European premises against the danger of fire . . . from Isale Eko."[106] A map depicting Lagos in the 1890s (fig. 1.5) outlines the city's three other ethnic districts.[107] Opposite Isale Eko, along the Atlantic Ocean, was the European district, the aforementioned "Marina." It hosted the British colonial government and associated residencies, as well as the Central Business District (CBD), including Broad Street. The third district was Oke Popo/Popo Agudá, home of the Brazilian immigrants. Yoruba people referred to the Brazilians as Amaro, "one who had been away from home." Finally, the fourth district was Olowogbowo, home to the Saro, the Yoruba name for emancipated immigrants from Sierra Leone.[108] The Saro adopted British surnames and dominated the local African elite by emulating British societal manners.[109]

---

104 Liora Bigon, *A History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals: Residential Segregation in British Lagos and French Dakar (1850-1930)*, 43; Akinsemoyin and Vaughan-Richards, *Building Lagos*, 7-9.

105 Bigon, "Sanitation and Street Layout in Early Colonial Lagos," 255.

106 Governor Glover spent most of his budget on roads, streets, and bridges to "enable the colonial authorities to seize, widen or improve any piece of ground" and to compensate the owners from rapidly spreading fires. Ibid, 255.

107 Ibid, 3-5.

108 For a deeper discussion on each of these communities, see Bigon, *History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals*, 40-45; P. D. Cole, "Lagos Society in the Nineteenth Century," in *Lagos: The Development of an African City*, A. B. Aderbigbe, ed. (Lagos, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria, 1975): 27-57; Michael J. C. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Lagos Life*, 15-21; R. K. Home, "Town Planning, Segregation and Indirect Rule in Colonial Nigeria," *Third World Planning Review* 5, no. 2 (1983): 165-75; Antony Hopkins, "Property Rights and Empire Building: Britain's Annexation of

Roads, such as Broad Street, racially segregated the city under the guise of acting as physical barriers against disease, since Europeans believed that the Yoruba were malaria carriers. The colonial government believed that the disease spread through Isale Eko's "unsanitary" conditions of close proximity. However, aeration in Yoruba compounds came from interior courtyards, as opposed to British preferred exterior gardens with wide, separating streets. Refuse was deposited in designated spot where it was regularly set on fire.[110] Yoruba residences were indeed sanitary, but not according to British medical knowledge or British belief in socioeconomic segregation.[111] British colonials lived by the seaside, believing that they would avoid the inland swamp's "bad air," helping to prevent malaria.[112] The residential area was further segregated from businesses with 400 yards of open land, another barrier against Yoruba inhabitants and preventive measure against malaria-carrying mosquitos.[113] Social classes were further segregated by home and plot size.

Lagos, 1861," *Journal of Economic History* 40, no. 4 (1980): 777-98; and Lindsay, "To Return to the Bosom of Their Fatherland: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos," 27-29, 36-37.

[109] Christopher Waterman, "Asíkò, Sákárà and Palmwine: Popular Music and Social Identity in Inter-War Lagos, Nigeria," *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 17, no. 2/3 (Summer/Fall 1988): 235-6.

[110] Bigon, "Between Local and Colonial Perceptions," 54.

[111] Deborah Weiner, *Architecture and Social Reform in Late-Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994): 6-9.

[112] "It was believed people became infected by coming in contact with 'bad air' blowing off the Roman Campagna; it was also noted both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe that intermittent fevers occurred most often among people living near wetlands, swamps and newly plowed lands. These were all landscapes with a great deal of damp, decaying organic material exposed to the air. Conversely lands on elevated, dry, or windy sites were generally not malarious." Stephen Frenkel and John Western, "Pretext or Prophylaxis? Racial Segregation and Malarial Mosquitos in a British Tropical Colony: Sierra Leone," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78, no. 2 (1988): 213.

[113] Home, "Town Planning, Segregation and Indirect Rule in Colonial Nigeria," 166; Frenkel and Western, "Pretext or Prophylaxis?," 213-14.

By end of the nineteenth century, Broad Street and the Marina were the most expensive properties in Lagos.[114] The area was highly commercialized, with easy access to trading ports; thus, British governors put their limited funds into enhancing these districts. The streets were modeled after those in England and were deemed "desirable [for] . . . a civilized abode." A writer for the *Anglo-African* newspaper stated: "We are glad to see in every direction evidence of a determination to introduce civilized improvements into the town. The new street in the east end, parallel to Water Street, is steadily progressing."[115] Saro residents conceived roads as symbols of an enlightened society, and therefore, as necessary and important for Lagos' civilized citizens.

Akinbiyi highlights Broad Street in 1995, although he uses the neighboring older edifices to harken back to the road's historical beginnings. The historic belief in Broad Street's importance continues into the contemporary period with pedestrians in the image making transactions, as evidenced by a female figure in the background carrying objects on her head and commercial buildings framing the photograph. In addition, the central female figure, walking along the sidewalk, demonstrates Lagos' communities' current intermixing with each other. Her black body moves through downtown Lagos with other individuals of various socioeconomic backgrounds. No longer are Yoruba, Brazilian, Saro and other Nigerian groups forced to live in particular neighborhoods, separated from British or other Europeans inhabitants. Broad Street is part of the commercial district where black corporate professionals engage with local traders from Nigeria's interior, as well as with locally-born Lebanese and Indian communities or expatriate British and

[114] Aderibigbe, "Early History of Lagos to about 1850," 23.
[115] *The Anglo-African* [Lagos], September 5, 1863.

America executives.[116] Moreover, the edifices show that the street has been rebuilt multiple times, as older buildings make way for new modern and contemporary corporate buildings and hotels.

Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across sidewalk] also sheds light on the relationship between architectural space and black bodies. The central pedestrian walks in the foreground, partially in front of the Brazilian building. Her presence is front and center in the photograph, along with the structure behind her. Ironically, during the colonial era, the building would have been used to hide her from public eyes. Scholar Nkriu Nwzegu writes that pre-colonial Yoruba compound architecture comprised horizontally built rooms surrounding a central courtyard and based on the notion of *ile*, or extended family. A critical part of *ile* was the notion that no one person or family owned the land; instead, the community was the custodian, ensuring a home for all. Women also occupied space on the same physical level as men, since they were a part of familial kinship groups and communal leaders.[117] Colonial and Brazilian architecture was based on individual land ownership and patriarchy. Homes built vertically organized space around gender lines where male spaces were on the main floor, indicating their professional roles as traders, lawyers, shopkeepers, engineers, etc. Women were regulated to the upper floors, away from the general public, since they maintained the day-to-day home life, and finally children had recreational space on the

[116] Nkiru Nzegwu, "Bypassing New York in Re-Presenting Eko: Production of Space in a Nigerian City," 116.
[117] Ibid, 116-117.

street or in backyard areas.[118] Therefore, Akinbiyi's positioning of a black female pedestrian in front a building that would have originally hidden her shows how local women have reclaimed Lagos' public space. In this instance, Akinbiyi was demonstrating how far the city had come in regards to different populations reorganizing various parts of the city.

Akinbiyi's desire to show Broad Street as a place of layered history also comes through in his aesthetic approach, repeating depictions of angular geometry. Depictions of rectangles, squares, horizontal and vertical lines are visible in the buildings, the sidewalk, and the central figure's dress. In showing all of these repeating patterns, the photographer tries to represent formally different layers of history. Each figure and each structure has its own story, but their similar designs suggest they are part of an integrated narrative, one that builds on top of each other, spanning across time.

Another important feature continuing Akinbiyi's interest in recovering history through traces is the sidewalk that the central figure walks across. While a sidewalk might seem rather mundane or innocuous, a Lagos insider can distinguish the differences in sidewalk design and its socioeconomic significance.[119] Sidewalks only became prevalent in the nineteenth century in Western cities when citizens began desiring a separate walking area from horse-drawn carriages. Business owners encouraged sidewalk

---

[118] Ibid, 123-125.

[119] I have not found any research on the creation of sidewalks and their significance within Lagos, although the lack of sidewalks historically and contemporarily in residential areas on the mainland is discussed in Jonathan Haynes, "Nollywood in Lagos: Lagos in Nollywood Films," *Africa Today* 54, no. 2 (2007): 135; Joshua Adetunjji Odeleye, "Improved Road Traffic Environment for Better Child Safety in Nigeria," in *ICTCT Workshop, 13th International Conference on Pedestrians and Road Design*, eds. (2000): 216; O.B. Olufemi and M.S. Oluseyi, "The Urban Poor and Mobility Stress in Nigerian Cities," *Environmental Research Journal* 1, no. 1-4 (2007): 3; and Hugh H. Smythe, "Urbanization in Nigeria." *Anthropological Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1960): 144.

development in commercial districts to increase pedestrian commerce. They became another "civilized" architectural symbol, since citizens could engage in social pageantry.[120] Although there is no literature on the development of sidewalks in Lagos, a viewer can infer that the one in Akinbiyi's image was probably built in the early twentieth century, another physical marker to further emulate British and American cities. Broad Street's ornately-designed, rectangular and diagonal, cement pavers do not resemble typical cement squares found in London or New York. Elaborate Lagos sidewalks are very unusual, since most non-commercial areas outside Lagos Island do not have sidewalks at all. Those that do are small handmade cement rectangles covering open water drains (fig. 1.4). Moreover, the sidewalk in Akinbiyi's image is well maintained, reflecting the Marina's historical and contemporary high status.

Akinbiyi's seemingly simple street scene reveals ways that the city has shifted in look and conception since the nineteenth century. He focuses on one street as a microcosm of growth and development, impacting other parts of Lagos, as a symbol, and as a silent witness to continual change. Masquelier argues that roads are "the main artery of the country's social, economic and political life…"[121] Broad Street has existed for over a century, acting as a catalyst for urban development as Lagos has expanded and moved from a colonial capital to an independent federal capital to an economic center. It is the location of international capitalism; yet it still retains its history in its very existence and surrounding landscape. Akinbiyi features a physical and symbolic marker of Lagos'

---

[120] Anatasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Renia Ehrenfeucht, *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009): 17-20, 41-43; Nicholas Bromley, *Rights of Passage: Sidewalks and the Regulation of Public Flow* (New York: Routledge, 2011): 57-58.

[121] Adeline Masquelier, "Road Mythologies: Space, Mobility, and the Historical Imagination in Post-colonial Niger," 829.

evolution, using it to trace the city's economic, social, and political past and present, thus indicating how complex Lagos' life was and continues to be. He references how architecture, public infrastructure, and human interaction are signs of some of the city's biggest changes in the past century and into the present era.

Development and Erasure

Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] also focuses on traces of Lagos' recent and more ancient past that has been erased or built upon over time. The buildings in his photograph represent how historical leaders organized the city, reflecting the socio-political mindset of the day, and how they were then reconceived and remade. The colonial period, again indicated through the central Brazilian-style building, saw Yoruba, Saro, Brazilian and European communities physically separated from each other. British Governor Frederick Lugard (1912-1919) believed strongly in racial separation and built "non-European Reservations" to maintain colonial polices, which created as little interference with native populations as possible.[122] However, those colonial policies were physically erased with Independence, allowing for free movement; this erasure is referenced through the photograph's modernist buildings. By tearing down older architecture forms "tainted" with European colonialism and replacing them with modern, steel and concrete headquarters for banks and corporations, Lagos touted itself as a "new" city for all Nigerians.[123] In the following generation, as represented through the Savannah Bank headquarters, Lagos continues its

[122] Home, "Town Planning, Segregation and Indirect Rule in Colonial Nigeria," 166.
[123] Daniel Immerwahr, "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Post-colonial Lagos, 1960-86," 172.

outward messaging as international, but now it is done in terms of economics. With skyscrapers for international corporations, Lagos projects itself as a finance capital on par with similar places in the Global South, such as Sao Paulo or Mexico City, as well as in its northern counterparts. Yet, with the Lagos elite trying to resituate their city on the international scene through contemporary architecture and urban planning, elected officials and corporations have repeatedly displaced thousands of working-class Lagosians and Nigerian migrants.

Akinbiyi is not the first Nigerian photographer to document Lagos' numerous changes since Independence. J.D. Okhai Ojeikere (1930-2014) also had a series of images of Lagos' architecture from 1963 to 1989. He moved to Lagos in 1961 to work at the advertising agency Lintas Ltd. and often walked around various parts of the city taking pictures of sights he found interesting.[124] His 1965 photograph, *Lagos City Hall*, emphasizes some the city's new look (fig. 1.7). Ojeikere looks at Catholic Mission Street, another major thoroughfare in the Marina, where British missionaries established churches during the late nineteenth century. Ojeikere took the photograph not long after the new structure was completed from the roof a hospital building across the street in order to show the vista around and behind the new government building.[125]

The photograph frames the new Lagos City Hall, another example of Tropical Modernism, as the focal point. The building dominates the scene, situated near a small bungalow residence across the street, complete with columns and surrounding ornate gate. The sky above the buildings is vast, with numerous clouds flanking the modernist

[124] Interview with J.D. Okhai Ojeikere, Lagos, Nigeria, April 2013.
[125] Ibid.

edifice, almost as if it was a gift from the celestial heavens. The street is mostly empty, although there are a few pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers in the mid-ground. Ojeikere presents Lagos City Hall as a monument to modernism, with its immense size, its stark angular shape, and its circular driveway, all dwarfing the setting. The partially visible columns reference neo-colonial design, and the building's large number of windows allows government officials to survey the nearby environment. As a symbol of local government, housing the Lagos City Council, the building re-enforces the idea of local political power.

In comparing Ojeikere's image to Akinbiyi's, both photographers demonstrate how architecture is an icon for sociopolitical change and power. Ojeikere's example of Tropical Modernism emphasizes Lagos' new phase within Nigeria and the international arena through physical changes. Akinbiyi's image similarly shows Lagos' transition; however, his image is almost a generation after Ojeikere. The Allen and Hansbury Building would have been almost forty years old by that point and would not have had the same resonance as it did when first constructed. Moreover, Akinbiyi cuts off the majority of the building, lessening its importance, while Ojeikere features City Hall front and center. Both photographers promote architecture as a visual and physical method of transforming Lagos, reframing its history and current status locally and internationally.

Ojeikere and Akinbiyi's images also indirectly relay the "darker side" of city rebuilding. *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] shows that for every new transformation on Broad Street, an existing structure is destroyed and/or group of people are evicted and relocated. All of the edifices in Akinbiyi's photograph are

tightly packed together. In order to build more high-rises, current buildings must be removed. Ojeikere's Lagos City Hall is directly across the street from a home. There is surprisingly little history on specifics of how Lagos City Hall was constructed, but one wonders if similar homes or small businesses were destroyed to create it. Using eminent domain policies for governmental infrastructural schemes comes as no shock since Lagos has a long-standing policy of community displacement in "urban renewal" efforts. Lagos' population grew from an estimated one million in 1960 to 25 million in 2015, with a built environment increasing from 200 square kilometers in 1960 to 1,140 square kilometers in 2005.[126] As Lagosians increased the city's population, available land to build upon shrunk for all classes, especially working families and individuals who did not have the capital to buy land. Therefore, renters or communities inhabiting empty, government space were, and are, continually displaced as their homes are destroyed for luxury residential and commercial redevelopment schemes.

Akinbiyi subtly hints at Lagos' displaced populations and the destruction of history in *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] through the various historical structures on Broad Street. He shows a more overt and extreme instance of dislodgment in a slightly earlier image, *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community] (1990). Here the photographer captured the aftermath of a roadside clearance scheme (fig. 1.8). Akinbiyi photographed the former Maroko neighborhood on Victoria Island, which was across town from Broad Street. Maroko had been destroyed for citywide "revitalization" projects. The destruction occurred so quickly, affecting such a large

126 Ibidun Adelekan, "Vulnerability of Poor Urban Costal Communities to Flooding in Lagos, Nigeria," *Environment & Urbanization* 22, no. 2 (October 2010): 438; George Packer, "The Megacity: Decoding the Chaos of Lagos," *The New Yorker*, November 13, 2006: 65.

population, that the situation became a sociological case study for Lagos' recent "slum clearances."[127]

The frame shows a seemingly empty landscape, full of debris, with broken chunks of rocks and cement in the foreground and background. The road is clear of detritus and bisects the scene. A lone tree or tall bush sits in the background and breaks up the flat horizon line. Finally, since there are no structures, viewers are able to see the horizon and cloudy sky above. All of these components suggest a desolate and melancholy sight. However, two objects in the foreground draw the eye. One is a partially broken cement block and the other is a partially broken sculptured body directly behind it. On first glance, the body looks to be a broken and emaciated torso. It lies on its side with arms broken and bent at unnatural angles. Closer examination reveals the body is a statue, most likely made of plaster from the visible joints and exposed metal armature. The overly defined yet shrunken chest and deeply lined forehead suggest the figure is an incomplete statue of Jesus Christ, as one would find in a church. These objects indicate that houses and churches resided in this location. Their presence among the debris denotes that even sacred spaces were sacrificed during Maroko's destruction.

Unlike *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk], which shows Lagos' previous shifts through remaining parts of the built environment, in *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community], Akinbiyi features a recent urban

---

[127] Adelekan, "Vulnerability of Poor Urban Coastal Communities to Flooding in Lagos, Nigeria," 448; Agbola and Jinadu, "Forced Eviction and Forced Relocation in Nigeria," 271-88; Felix Morka, "A Place to Live; A Case Study of the Ijora-Badia Community in Lagos, Nigeria," in *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements* (2007): 8-10. Accessed online September 2016: http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/GRHS.2007.CaseStudy.Tenure.Nigeria.pdf.; Sule, "Recent Slum Clearance Exercise in Lagos (Nigeria)," 81-89.

transformation through the complete demolition of an existing community. Akinbiyi framed his shot so that the reclining figure resembled a human body. This figure highlights the lack of humans and begs the question: were persons killed during Maroko's flattening? In addition, since the statue is a representation of Jesus lying as though dead, Akinbiyi links Maroko's physical erasure to Christ's crucifixion. The photographer heightens Jesus' death with the neighborhood's "death" by framing the image so that the statue is seemingly on a cross. The cement block in the far distance marks the vertical axis while the road is the horizontal axis. As Jesus sacrificed himself for humanity, Maroko's physical dwellings were sacrificed for economic redevelopment. The difference here is agency. Jesus chose to sacrifice himself, while Maroko's community was disempowered and had no choice.[128]

Unfortunately, speedy removals of low-income housing communities are common in Lagos, especially for areas near high-income gated housing estates. Individuals and families working for wealthy homeowners in Victoria Island and Ikoyi established informal communities in close proximity for easier access.[129] The government owned the land and state officials labeled these areas illegally inhabited slums. Only a small percentage of Maroko's 300,000 inhabitants was officially relocated, so it is unclear where community members moved.[130] After everyone was cleared out, construction

---

[128] While I know the analogy here is not one-to-one because Jesus was a person and spiritual power and Maroko was a collection of physical structures that housed thousands of people, the association between the person and the neighborhood is still relevant.

[129] Agbola and Jinadu, "Forced Eviction and Forced Relocation in Nigeria," 279-80.

[130] Ibid, 271-88.

began on luxury homes, hotels, and a tollgate entrance to Lekki, another wealthy area of the city.

Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] and *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community] highlight Lagos' cyclical pattern of elite citizens and governmental officials claiming space for urban renewal projects. Broad Street and Maroko's redevelopments are examples of Lagos' officials deeming congested areas as "slums" in order to evict long-standing working-class communities and create lavish gated estates. Scholar Liora Bigon writes that British colonials began removing Yoruba communities in Isale Eko in the late nineteenth century because Britons were disgusted with the layout and design of Yoruba homes. British writers described the neighborhood at the time as a "rubbish heap"[131] because the compact nature of Yoruba compound architecture reminded them of London's lower-class neighborhoods.[132]

In calling these informal communities "slums," governments and urban planners are able to characterize them as degenerate, referencing nineteenth-century British

---

[131] Richard Burtpn was a nineteenth-century British explorer and a consul in the British Foreign Office in Fernando Po, a Spanish island off the coast in West Africa. He spent three years traveling throughout the region between 1861 and 1864. He published an article on his travels, "My Wanderings in West Africa," in 1863 in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*. He wrote of traveling in the area around Lagos, including what I am assuming is the Marina because of his descriptions of waterfront factories, which was the main aspect of that area, even though it is not directly stated. "The factories then engaged our attention. Of course they are execrably (check spelling) situated for health and safety…I was not surprised to see wretched barracks, principally of mat and broken-down boardings, some of them inundated after heavy rains. Whilst people prefer these places to hulks, they must expect an occasional visitation from the natives, to say nothing of fever and dysentery…There was, however, a redeeming point in the view. Amidst all this squalor and wretchedness, the majestic 'River Beautiful' poured its tribute to the ocean through long reaches, hazy headlands, and blue bluffs…" Richard Burton, "My Wanderings in West Africa," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country,* February 1863, 138-39. Liora Bigon also gives examples of statements of Lagos as an ugly place by nineteenth and early twentieth century visitors to the city. Liora Bigon, "Between Local and Colonial Perceptions: The History of Slum Clearances in Lagos (Nigeria), 1924-1960," *African and Asian Studies* 7 (2008): 51-4.

[132] Bigon, "Between Local and Colonial Perceptions: The History of Slum Clearances in Lagos (Nigeria), 1924-1960," 56-7.

terminology. According to Bigon, there was no clear definition for the word "slum," although it was probably a slang expression derived from either the word "slump," or "slumber." Slump meant "to fall or sink in a swamp of muddy place," which referenced back alleys where poor Londoners slept (or slumbered).[133] "Slum" was therefore a pejorative term that British elite utilized throughout the late nineteenth century to describe lower-class, overcrowded, and "unsanitary" areas throughout central London. Families in these neighborhoods had little access to doctors, running water, and proper housing. The upper classes also perceived these communities as filled with hardened criminals. Literature contributed two main characterizations of London's working-class areas: places of fear with criminals and outlaws, essentially lawlessness, and places to pity shoeless, hungry, prepubescent heroes. British elites, believing these literary characterizations, regularly evicted individuals and families in these neighborhoods to counteract the "worsening of civilized society."[134] The colonial government continued to use the term in relation to Nigerian communities without taking into considering the cultural differences between the populations. In a more contemporary context, Lagos Governor Bola Tinabu (1999-2007) targeted the working-class neighborhoods, which were filled with so-called "area boys," young unemployed men who often begged, stole, or extorted money from middle- and upper-class Lagosians for survival. These young men lived under highway bridges and in informal housing communities throughout the

[133] Ibid, 56-7.
[134] Ibid, 55

city. Their presence was another reasoning for governmental land reclamation efforts in working-class neighborhoods.[135]

The early British perceptions of propriety and hygiene from the "mother country" translated into an extreme within Nigeria. Colonizers perceived Lagos' indigenous areas as unsightly and unsanitary. However, they overlooked the unique design of Yoruba compound architecture with its interior courtyard and blamed it for Lagos' unsanitary conditions. However, although the British complained about Lagos' unsightly character, they did not consider that the city was run on extremely meager funds, which did not allow for major planning efforts outside colonial designated areas. Despite Lagos' high status within the colonial structure, the limited funds were spread across Nigeria's entire northern and southern protectorate regions. The colonial leaders focused their monies on the European districts, since these included the expatriate residential and administrative areas.[136]

As the lack of any Yoruba architecture in *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] shows, British soldiers destroyed any indigenous areas they designated as slums starting in the 1920s. In 1924 a serious malaria epidemic spread across Lagos Island, resulting in the creation of the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) in 1928. The LEDB included the departments of Sanitary Service and Public Works as primary members. The aim of the LEDB was to re-plan, develop, and improve Lagos by clearing congested neighborhoods and relocating inhabitants. Thousands of Lagosians were removed from Lagos Island and their homes destroyed because they were

---

135 Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 313.

136 Bigon, "Sanitation and Street Layout in Early Colonial Lagos," 249-50.

considered "infected."[137] Similar clearances have continued throughout mid to late twentieth century when whole communities of people living in "huts," homes made of natural, plant materials and/or iron sheets, were destroyed. The LEDB considered these structures temporary and unsanitary because of their cheap construction materials and their close proximity. In 1955 the LEBD redeveloped land within Isale Eko for retail potential due to its proximity to the Marina and European residences on Ikoyi. The project took two years to complete and was highly contested by Yoruba residents, especially those being displaced. Families were placed in a newly constructed housing estate called Surelere on the mainland, but the scheme ultimately failed.[138] It should be noted that locals did not just accept their homes' destruction. There are documented accounts of local rulers protesting against the LEDB and their policies in Isale Eko by submitting formal, written complaints.[139]

However, *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] also points to locals claiming space as resistance. Even though most of the featured architecture was "prestige" for Lagosian elites, the "face me-face you" homes are reminders that disenfranchised individuals are still active, present and making an impact on the city. Those structures, which tended to house multiple families, are visible in Akinbiyi's image, suggesting that they survived the destruction of similar structures and perhaps those who lived in them. Although they may eventually be demolished given their prime location on Broad Street, those buildings act as markers of Akinbiyi's

[137] Bigon, "Between Local and Colonial Perceptions," 60-61.
[138] Ibid, 72.
[139] Ibid, 61-62.

childhood Lagos when the city did not have skyscrapers, but two- to three-story buildings housing more of a mixture of economic classes within a neighborhood.

In addition, even if communities, such as Maroko, in *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community] were destroyed for their location, the inhabitants developed new dwellings within weeks on other plots of unoccupied land.[140] No matter how often land was zoned for a particular use, locals re-appropriated the space for their own needs. The new reclamations were not always permanent, but their mere presence caused trouble for governmental administrators and demonstrated the local population's power. The land was usually taken away, but individuals still found ways to mark space as their own by building structures as quickly as possible, thereby keeping their legacies alive.

Unfortunately, Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community] shows Maroko right after it was cleared. Unlike *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk], where later edifices indicate what transformations took place, that is not the case for the other image. Viewers will never know who lived in Maroko, for how long, or what happened because the *before* was not caught on camera. The artist's *after* image with its minute objects of material culture does give evidence that a community existed. Although both images show traces of the area's respective pasts, those remnants indicate a long legacy of uneven power relationships in Lagos' history of resistance to state-sanctioned development.

Untitled [Destroyed roadside community], like *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk], is a thoughtful visual intervention, recording and critiquing

[140] Bigon, "Between Local and Colonial Perceptions," 63.

how individual and communal histories within Lagos are continuously erased for so-called progress over time. Yet, in taking photographs of Lagos' ongoing shifts, Akinbiyi shows that not all stories are forgotten. Masquelier's argument on Route Nacionale 1 is extremely poignant here as she argues that, while roads are a nation's major form of development, they can also be associated with some of that nation's most tragic moments.[141] Maroko's legacy, along with countless other destroyed communities, then becomes a cautionary tale of a road's duality; it can be bring accessibility to communities as well as destruction.

Untitled [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] indicates how Lagos governmental reorganization of private and public space, racial segregation, and removal of working-class neighborhoods continued throughout the twentieth century. Lagos is known internationally for the numerous informal housing communities spread throughout the city. In his *Planet of Slums* (2006), urban theorist Mike Davis begins by stating: "Sometime in the next year or two a woman will give birth in the Lagos slum of Ajegunle."[142] While Davis' statement signals a gender bias against women adding to Lagos' ever-growing population, it also re-articulates an established representation of the city as dirty and without proper governance. However, Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community] reconsiders these spaces by giving Maroko a visual reference point, signaling unknown stories about the individuals who lived there, and showing how they were reorganized for urban development. *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking

---

[141] Adeline Masquelier, "Road Mythologies: Space, Mobility, and the Historical Imagination in Post-colonial Niger," 831.
[142] Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2007), 1.

across the sidewalk] then shows the hidden stories of Broad Street, a place that has repeatedly transitioned as Lagos has expanded and increased in population. Both of these locations are places that were, and are, filled with people, homes, churches, and markets that spread elsewhere.

Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] suggests that sites like Broad Street are palimpsests of a long series of uneven power relationships in Lagos' history of resistance to colonial, and later, state-sanctioned, development. Land in Lagos is very valuable, and since the city is Nigeria's economic hub, filled with corporations and petty traders, the city's population will continue to grow, forcing any available land to be claimed. The working classes will be continue to live in unstable situations since they have no economic claim to government land, repeating a cycle of displacement and "urban renewal."

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I argue that Akinbiyi's *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] gives viewers a history of Lagos' spatial reorganization and development since the nineteenth century. His image of Broad Street is a microcosm of communal memory. Outwardly banal spaces, such as Broad Street, present Lagos' complex history as well as its present because roads are unconventional markers of localized knowledge. The older buildings on Broad Street, as seen in the photograph, reflect Lagos' Brazilian and British colonial heritage, representing some of the various ethnic groups that have called the city home. The contemporary architecture reminds viewers that Lagos is a global economic powerhouse. The citizens within Akinbiyi's

photograph also reflect the racial shifts over the course of a century where a formerly segregated, British colonial district is now filled with local Nigerian entrepreneurs and working professionals.

Akinbiyi also emphasizes how one road can show a city's history. Broad Street has been one of the most important public spaces in Lagos because it was initially a symbol of Western civilization, then later, of modernization, and finally, of international commerce. Throughout its history, it has been a participant in Lagos' transition from a British Crown Colony to Nigeria's, and Africa's, largest city; it is also a silent observer. Although Broad Street is not a sentient being, its presence is a marker of all of the major shifts that Lagos has experienced. By featuring it, Akinbiyi demonstrates how one street scene can represent a much larger tale.

Finally, Akinbiyi's representation of change throughout Lagos' history also suggests negative aspects to urban development. While economic commerce and job creation are important, the photographer questions how these efforts impact Lagos' working classes. *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] shows past transition in one location, but one wonders about the stories of people, homes, and businesses that were displaced to build on Broad Street. Too many neighborhoods throughout Lagos have been and are continuously destroyed and rebuilt for the sake of development. While these displaced communities can rebuild and move forward, that is not an easy feat. Government officials and wealthy homeowners build luxury hotels, office buildings, and walled-in estates without considering where working-class individuals and families will live. Destroying homes and businesses because they do not

look pretty is not the answer and does not alleviate the cause. Akinbiyi's image makes the plight of Lagos' displaced communities more apparent. His subtle imagery creates a sense of humanity by reminding viewers that with destruction of a neighborhood or a historical structure, individual and communal narratives and histories cease to exist. One wonders if any of the buildings in *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] are still standing or were torn down for a new use. Akinbiyi's image suggests that urban renewal efforts, past and present, are dual-edged swords with long-term effects.

As a project, *All Roads* bares Lagos' "secrets" by showing that they are not secrets at all but truths recognizable by insiders. This information is not being kept from larger audiences, but viewers need to look beyond the surface to see the city's infinite complexity. Akinbiyi's photographs take viewers into Lagos' core, since he is focused on the heart of the city and its expansion outward. In the next chapter I explore the photographs of artist Otobong Nkanga, who presents Lagos' periphery as spaces of spirituality and environment transition, as well as personal memorial.

OTOBONG NKANGA

Nigerian photographer Otobong Nkanga's (b. 1974) was raised in Lagos, similarly to Akinbiyi, though a generation later. Her interest in the visual arts stemmed from her mother who taught a young Nkanga how to paint fabrics and art pieces to sell for additional income. The artist began her career in art school, taking courses at Obafemi Awolowo University, and then Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts.[143] Unlike Akinbiyi Nkanga does not limit her oeuvre to photography, but incorporates it with performance, painting, drawing, and installation.

Her images of Lagos show that the expansion of the city in the early years of the twenty-first century is not easy or smooth. Her representation of the developing areas of Lagos in 2001 teases out that the land around expressways going into the interior of Nigeria are unstable spaces at a crossroads of transition between the tangible and the intangible, the natural and the built environments. Nkanga has been personally interested in these peripheral roads and spaces outside Lagos because one of them was the site of a great personal tragedy. Her photographs signal the artist's underlying concern that the city's expansion is both dangerous as well as progressive. They invite the viewer to contemplate the multiple tensions, both economic and cultural, that occur in light of the region's uneven growth due to shifting relations between its powerful and wealthy class and the working class.

Nkanga's *Road Series* (2001) are photographs of sights along the Lagos-Ibadan Freeway, one of the main areas of Lagos' growth. Her series on Lagos reflects a younger

[143] Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Berlin, Germany, June 21, 2013.

generation of Lagosians that grew up in the city during its lowest political and economic period through its shift at the end of the twentieth century. The city's expansion into the periphery began after the re-introduction of democratic elections in 1999. During the 1980s and 1990s Lagos and Nigeria underwent a major recession due to massive international debts, the corrupt military dictatorship of Sani Abacha, and of the extremes in wealth, housing, and overpopulation.

After the return to democracy, Nkanga witnessed the shift in Lagos' political and economic conditions, which generated new industries such as telecommunications, causing an influx of migrants into the city for opportunities.[144] The ongoing influx of workers has caused the population density of the city to move beyond its maximum capacity, making available land scarce and extremely expensive. Nkanga and her family lived in FESTAC Village in the early 1990s, an area built in 1977 for foreign visitors to the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC). Homes there, and much of the center of the city, were no longer affordable to most of the middle and working classes due to their cost.[145] Most commercial and residential building development now occurs along the borders of the Lekki peninsula on the eastern outskirts of the city as well as the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in the northern areas where land is cheaper and plentiful.[146]

---

144 Michael Filani, "A City in Transition: Vision, Reform, and Growth in Lagos, Nigeria," In *Cities Alliance: Cities without Slums* (Ibadan: The Foundation for Development and Environmental Initiatives, 2011): 1; Robert Drapper, "Africa's First City," *National Geographic*, January 2015, 78-106.

145 Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Berlin, Germany, June 21, 2013.

146 Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 316.

To highlight the importance of Nkanga's primarily photographic interpretations, this chapter performs a close reading of *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* (2001), an image from the artist's earliest Lagos series, *Road Series* (2001). Nkanga made the series as an art student in Paris at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux Arts. Her photograph bridges her formal training in studio art and art history along her privileged insider knowledge of the city, its surroundings, its unique emblems, and her life experience as a middle-class Lagosian of Ibibo heritage. The artist uses photography as the medium allows Nkanga to manipulate the framing to create compositions that suggest human interaction with symbols of invisible spirits and the environment. Moreover, photography gives the artist agency since the medium's indexical quality results in it being a form of reality. Yet, she is still able to craft a narrative reflecting Lagosian perspective. Her composed image of rural landscapes with buses as markers of human intervention suggests the tension of the city's growth into areas outside of Lagos.

Road Series was inspired by Nkanga's mother's death in a car accident in 1992. The images are highly blurred, featuring overturned trucks and buses. This combination of visual distortions and markers of humanity, suggest Nkanga is referencing the larger epidemic of car wrecks along freeways entering and exiting the city. She is also suggesting that spirits may be responsible for those accidents. As discussed with Akinbiyi's images, individuals plead with Yoruba deities for protection; however, this does not mean they cannot also cause destruction. Nkanga's use of photography also heightens the connection between the visible and invisible using the medium's legacy as an object in Yoruba mourning rituals and the Western notion of *memento mori*.

Rich analysis can be derived from the underlying spiritual implications of Nkanga's photographs. I read Nkanga's representation of Lagos through the Yoruba definition of a crossroads. Though Nkanga is Ibibo from southeastern Nigeria, Lagos is located in Yorubaland and the city's origins even contain Yoruba myths.[147] Moreover, the Yoruba definition of crossroads is utilized as a point of intersection, as "a liminal space, a site of tricks and uncertainty where anything might happen…"[148] In Yoruba cosmology, the crossroads, or *orita*, signifies multiple forms of upcoming change. The definition specifically connects to how the artist represents the borderlands of Lagos at a crossroads of transition, from rural to suburban or urban organization, but also a place where Lagosians are shifting from the human realm to the spiritual realm through death.

Haunted Memories of the Road

In *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* (fig. 2.1), an image from Nkanga's *Road Series*, is a blurry depiction of an abandoned danfo, sitting on the side of the road. Danfos are privately owned buses used by the majority of Lagosians as a cheap form of public transportation. They are identifiable by their Volkswagen T3 chassis shape and "Jakande

---

147 There is the tale of the first settler of Lagos, Ogunfunimire, who came to the area from Ile-Ife, was a hunter, and could also change himself into a boa constrictor. Takiu Folami, *A History of Lagos, Nigeria: The Shaping of an African City* (New York: Exposition Press, 1982): 3-4. The Yoruba were earliest settlers to Lagos and continue to have the largest percentage of the city's population (65%), though it is also home to numerous other Nigerian ethnicities, such as Igbo (15%), Hausa (15%), and other nationalities such as Lebanese, American and British (5% total). Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 315.

148 Margaret Thompson Drewal, *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992): 26; Kimberly Miller, "Cross-Dressing at the Crossroads: Mimic and Ambivalence in Yoruba Masked Performance," in *Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture*, Susan Fillin-Yeh, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2001): 211.

Yellow" colors.[149] With the back doors ajar, the windows and tires seemingly gone, the danfos' normally bright color is muted, most likely after being left for a long period of time. Despite its bleak state, the bus color contrasts strongly with the tall green grass behind it and the beige ground beneath it. Though the bus is not directly in the middle of the frame, its location in the foreground designates it as the focal point. The framing of the bus raises questions. What is the story behind the vehicle's abandonment? What happened to the missing passengers?

The hazy quality of Nkanga's photograph, including the partially visible small, white, smoky wisps along the foreground in the front of the bus are the result of the camera being out of focus when the image was taken. This picture, along with others, from *Road Series* were all photographed clandestinely while Nkanga was riding with fellow photographer Amaize Ojeikere as the duo was driving from Lagos to Ibadan.[150] The Expressway is one of the main arteries in Nigeria, running 120 kilometers from Lagos to Ibadan.[151] Ojeikere was driving while the artist took the photographs from the passenger side of the car. Rather than stopping at each location to frame each image, the artist snapped them as the car slowed down while staying in motion. The car's movement

---

149 Danfos are imported German mini-buses. They are privately owned and operated, and are traditionally painted a yellow that was introduced under the administration of Lateef Jakande, the governor of Lagos State from 1979 to 1983. The color was originally painted on molues, larger buses that have since gone out of use. Damola Osinulu, "Painters, Blacksmiths and Wordsmiths: Building Molues in Lagos," *African Arts* 41, no. 3 (Autumn 2008): 45, 49.

150 Nkanga did not leave Amaize's vehicle to take the images because photography in public places around Lagos during the 1990s was perceived as a form of governmental surveillance. Citizens were suspicious when unknown individuals tried to photograph them and their neighborhoods. Nkanga had an earlier experience of trying to photograph the National Theatre and was run off by some local men because they did not know her or her purpose.
Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Berlin, Germany, June 21, 2013.

151 Marloes Janson, *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2014): 4.

enabled Nkanga to take the photographs out of focus to create an overall blurry effect and the white patterns in front of the bus.

The distortions in *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* create smears in the frame that allude to a ghostly presence in a photographic format that would otherwise not be visible. This purposeful blurriness creates an ethereal quality to the film, suggesting the blending of spaces. The white swirls symbolize the essence of spirits inhabiting the landscape captured on film. Historically, within Western society, visible forms of photographic manipulation (i.e. smears, white spots, or shadows), on the image were thought to be ghostly communications or a spiritual essence.[152] Ghosts within Western societies are traditionally considered to be specters, beings without corporeal forms that are semi-transparent or blurs. The camera captured rays of light that the naked eye could not. In fact, during the late nineteenth century, those distortions were read as deceased figures trying to communicate beyond the grave.[153]

In the Yoruba religion the deceased do not become ghosts in the Western sense, but they are not gone from the world. Rather, if they lived a long, good life in the human world, they become an Ancestor. Their lives extended into another realm where they are free from the restraints imposed on Earth. Ancestors can greatly affect the lives of their living descendants, depending on whether they are appeased or angered. Living family members must treat sculptural or pictorial representations of the deceased as if they are in

---

[152]Allen W. Grove, "Röntgen's Ghosts: Photography, X-Rays, and the Victorian Imagination," *Literature and Medicine* 16, no. 2 (1997): 142.
[153] Ibid, 150-52.

the human realm giving regular offerings of food and drink; otherwise the ancestors can create havoc on the living.[154]

The Yoruba also believe that, in the origination of the world and human life, human beings had a much closer relationship with Olódùmarè, the Creator. Oral traditions state that people were not limited, as they are now, to being able to move freely between the human world and *orun* (the otherworld). Unfortunately, a rift developed between people and spirits, separating the worlds, and creating an ongoing cosmic imbalance.[155] Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* builds upon the notion of a cosmic imbalance by representing a location outside of Lagos as a possible crossroads allowing Yoruba spirits to affect humanity.

The visual distortions in *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* are prevalent throughout the rest of the images in *Road Series*. *Tollgate to Ibadan #5* (fig. 2.2) is another blurry depiction of an abandoned vehicle. In this photograph, Nkanga depicts an overturned tanker on its side by the edge of the highway. The overall hazy quality of the image causes smearing of writing and lettering on the side of the tanker, as well as small white wisps along the edge of the left frame. The smears in this example, and others in *Road Series*, suggests the prevalence of spirits on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway engaging with humans.

Nkanga is not the only Nigerian artist to use similar visual distortions in her photography to allude to spirits. George Osodi (b. 1974) is a photographer from the same generation as Nkanga. In his photographic series, *The Devil's Dexterity* (2008), which

---

154 J. Omosade Awolalu, "The Yoruba Philosophy of Life," *Présence Africaine* 73 (1970): 27-28.

155 Thomas Douglas, *African Traditional Religion in the Modern World* (Jefferson: MacFarland, 2015): 103-04.

also includes images of road abuse on Nigerian highways,[156] the artist incorporates a blurred effect to suggest movement and spiritual intervention. In *Devil's Dexterity #1* and *Devil's Dexterity #6* (figs. 2.3 and 2.4), Osodi depicts rusted, abandoned cars with an evanescent-looking figure standing next to them. Nkanga's photographs are completely blurred, while Osodi's are not except for the figure. The landscape and cars are in crisp focus, while the figure seems incompletely within the scene. The distortion causes the figure's presence to be the focal point of the frame – the eye tries to bring him or her into focus. The individual liminal state suggests the idea he or she is not of the human world, since the viewer cannot see them clearly. The specter's presence by the car remnants is another implication that inhuman entities are present on Nigerian roadways.

Osodi and Nkanga are creating relationships between the physical and spiritual worlds using the out-of-focus quality of their photographs and the abandoned cars and tankers within the frames. The distortions in Nkanga's *Road Series* are symbols of supernatural entities in Lagos possibly causing harm to the living. The artist is making an indirect connection because there is no action in the scene, letting the viewer create his or her own narrative as to what may have happened. However, the presence of the danfo in *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* gives a pessimistic tone to the work since Lagosians colloquially refer to them as "flying coffins."[157] By including the vehicle in the shot Nkanga implies

---

156 Nelson P. Graves, "Drivers Dexterity: George Osodi's Oeuvre on Safety on the Nigerian Road," *International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 5.1, no. 16 (January 16): 13.

157 B.O. Odufuwa, I.A. Ademiluyi, and O.H. Adedeji, "Transport Poverty and Deviant Driving Behavior in Nigerian Intermediate Cities," (published electronically): https://dev.codatu.org/wp-content/uploads/Transport-poverty-and-deviant-driving-behaviour-in-Nigerian-intermediate-cities-B.O.-ODUFUWA-I.A.-ADEMILUYI.pdf

how dangerous they are to ride in even though millions of people use them daily to navigate into and around Lagos.

Furthermore, the three distorted photographs of overturned trucks and tankers along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in *Road Series* (figs. 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5) indicate not only that there is a high percentage of road accidents around Lagos, but that Yoruba deities, such as Ogun, may be responsible. As discussed in Chapter 1, road accidents are prevalent in Lagos, other parts of Nigeria, and throughout the West African region mainly due to poorly constructed roads, badly maintained vehicles, and aggressive driving. The issue is so problematic that numerous Nigerian and Western scholars of various fields write about the urgent need for possible solutions, as well as the effects road accidents have on pedestrians and other drivers, which is often death.[158] This was the case for Nkanga's own mother who died as the result of a vehicular accident on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. The spiritual intervention in her photographs, symbolized by the swirls, indicates continued problems between the lives of indigenous Nigerians practicing their traditional religion and their fast-paced, modern lifestyle.

---

158 To see a larger range of articles on the interdisciplinary issue of road accidents in Nigeria and other parts of West Africa see Chapter 1, citation 64. Additional articles include V.M. Nantulya and Michael R. Reich, "The neglected epidemic: roads traffic injuries in developing countries," *British Medical Journal* 324, no. 7346 (2002): 1139-1141; D.C. Obalum, S.O. Giwa, T.O. Adekoya-Cole, and G.O. Enweluzo, "Profile of spinal injuries in Lagos, Nigeria," *Spinal Cord* 47, no. 2(2009): 134-137; M.O. Ogunlewe, O. James, Akinola L. Ladiende, and W.L. Adeyemo, "Pattern of pediatric maxillofacial fractures in Lagos, Nigeria," *International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry* 16, no. 5 (2006): 358-362; Madu Onwudike, Olufemi A. Olaloye, and Olusol O.A. Oni, "Teaching Hospital perspective on the quality of trauma care in Lagos, Nigeria," *World Journal of Surgery* 25, no. 1 (2001): 114; B.A. Solagberu, C.K.P. Ofoegbu, L.O. Abdur-Rahman, A.O. Adekanye, U.S. Udoffa, and J. Taiwo, "Pre-hospital care in Nigeria: a country without emergency medical services," *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice* 12, no. 1 (2009): 29-33; Martins O. Thomas and Ezekiel O. Ogunleye, "Penetrating chest trauma in Nigeria," *Asian Cardiovascular and Thoracic Annals* 13, no. 2 (2005): 103-106; V.I. Ugboko, S.A. Odusanya, and O.O. Fagade, "Maxillofacial factures in semi-urban Nigerian teaching hospital: A review of 442 cases," *International Journal of oral and maxillofacial surgery* 27, no. 4 (1998): 286-89.

In fact, Nkanga's mother's death inspired *Road Series*. The artist and her mother were driving to college in Ile-Ife to return Nkanga to school at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University). During the return voyage via the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the women were hit head-on by a military truck. The accident crushed the car, injuring Nkanga and her mother. Nearby inhabitants saw the accident and drove the artist and her mother to a hospital in Ibadan. Unfortunately, Nkanga's mother died at the hospital. Her mother's death had lasting emotional and economical effects on Nkanga and the artist's siblings since she and her older sister became responsible for their elementary-age brothers. The artist would continue her career in Europe, but would periodically return home to see her siblings and send money to her family in Nigeria.[159]

In 2000, almost a decade after the event, Nkanga was staying in Lagos for a month at the home of Nigerian photographer J.D. Okhai Ojeikere, learning photographic techniques. At the time, Nkanga was art student living in Paris and wanted to experiment in photography.[160] During her stay, she and Amaize, Ojeikere's son, went on daily excursions together to take pictures throughout the city.[161] The duo decided to drive to University of Ife so Nkanga would meet with a former professor. While driving on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway the artist noticed an increase in cars and car wreckages by the roadside. The sights triggered Nkanga's memories of her earlier accident on the same highway. She then began taking pictures of the wrecks as she passed by them.[162]

---

159 Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Berlin, Germany, June 22, 2013.

160 Nkanga normally uses photographs as part of her research for installations and performances, but had not focused on it as part of her oeuvre. Ibid.

161 Ibid.

162 Ibid.

Though Nkanga's *Road Series* was the result of the artist's personal tragedy, her images indicate how widespread road accidents are in Lagos and Nigeria. According to scholars, Nigeria has the highest road traffic accident rate in Africa, increasing from 38% (1991) to 60% (2001). In Lagos State, where Lagos is located, there is an average of 32 traffic deaths per 1,000 people (2007), which is compared to 1.4 traffic deaths per 1,000 in major cities in the U.S.[163] Despite the high levels of vehicular fatalities in and around Lagos, western writers have created a mythology of excitement and fear of motor transport in Nigeria and West Africa from their seemingly near death experiences in "bush taxis."

> All day the car flew along Nigeria's narrow, crowded arterial north-south highway at speeds around a hundred miles per hour. We sat together, passengers and driver, grim-faced and silent, not uttering a word to one another. Occasionally I heard a soft exclamation, "Allah!" or a gasp…We played chicken on blind curves in the inside lane, passing five, six cars at a time, and always seemed to regain our own lane with only a few feet to spare before we would have smashed into oncoming traffic.[164]

While the author of the above quote, Peter Chilson, creates an adrenaline-filled scene for Western readers, Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* is subtle and somber, suggesting that the experience of having a family member go through a fatal car crash is an emotional and psychological hardship, not exhilarating. Chilson then describes passing a bus caught on fire from a prior accident. He writes that while looking at the accident he thought of the road demons in Niger and the "vengeful spirit" of Ogun, the Yoruba deity of iron and

---

163 Augustus Atubi and Patience Onokala, "Contemporary Analysis of Variability in Road Traffic Accidents in Lagos State, Nigeria," *African Geographical Review* 28, no. 1 (March 2009): 13-14.

164 Peter Chilson, *Riding the Demon: On the Road in West Africa* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999): 3.

war, known to kill travelers to feed his unrelenting hunger.[165] Ogun is associated with travel and transportation because of his mythology of using his iron machetes to clear a path on Earth for the other deities to settle in the landscape.[166] Ogun's nature of forward progression and violence is the reason why travelers will make animal sacrifices to him for protection rather than become self-sacrifices when he is angered.[167]

Chilson's narrative adds another spiritual context for *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* since Nkanga's image shows the results of a situation after the fact. The photograph can be read through a Yoruba lens of Ogun inflicting harm on the danfo passengers by possibly causing a crash. The photographic manipulation implies spirits, combined with the car accident. With Nkanga representing a possible interaction between humans and spirits along the periphery of Lagos, the artist suggests that the location in the scene is a crossroads between worlds.

Since Nkanga is a young Lagosian artist who lives at the crossroads between indigenous and Western beliefs and lifestyles, her implication of Lagos being a physical crossroads is appropriate. Her images can be construed as sending a twofold message. On the surface level, her photographs calls attention to the needless destruction of human lives on these roads and liminal spaces. On a deeper level, they remind more knowledgeable viewers of Lagos of the continuing cultural conflict of indigenous Lagosians negotiating spaces being transformed by economic forces. Nigerian scholar Olatunde Bayo Lawuyi writes that Yoruba taxi and bus drivers often rely on traditional

---

165 Ibid, 5-6.

166 J. Omosade Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites* (London: Longman, 1979): 31-32.

167 Ibid, 32.

spiritual intervention to keep them and passengers safe while on the roads. Even if the driver is a practicing Christian or Muslim, they may frequently resort to Yoruba religious practices by asking diviners for amulets to place inside their vehicles as additional protection against the uncertainties of daily life.[168]

Nkanga presents the idea of death in *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* by indirection. She does not use dead bodies or blood; instead, she features danfos, known for their unsafe conditions, and photographs locations where deaths may have occurred. For Nkanga, the car remnants are the traces of past accidents and their presence in her photographs draw attention to that fact. Nkanga's implied connection takes the image beyond her personal experience of losing her mother to one that is more communal. The danfo holds an average of twelve people and can therefore indicate the plurality of death. In addition, the aforementioned repetition of the overturned trucks and abandoned cars in the series shows that vehicular death along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway extends beyond the artist's singular occurrence.

George Osodi's *Devil Dexterity* series also present the edges of Lagos as a space of transition between life and death through images of car crashes along the city's roads. Osodi began his project after a near-death experience due to a car accident.[169] The artist recovered, though the accident increased his awareness of car detritus while driving in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria. Osodi's images depict what he calls the *carcasses* of abandoned and destroyed motor vehicles along various roads and highways in open green

---

168 Olatunde Bayo Lawuyi, "The World of the Yoruba Taxi Driver: An Interpretive Approach to Vehicle Slogans," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 58, no. 1 (1988): 4.
169 Interview with George Osodi, Newark, New Jersey, March 3, 2015.

spaces just outside the core of Lagos. He juxtaposed the beauty of the landscape with the ugliness of the cars.[170] In several of those photographs, a figure is dressed in white cloth and covered with a black mask and horns. This gender ambiguous individual is the same person described in *Devil's Dexterity #1*, representing the Devil. The Devil is blurry and distorted in certain images, and is shown with complete clarity in others. More importantly is the Devil's presence in the photographs, next to abandoned and rusted out cars. Osodi states that, within Nigeria, Evangelical Christians will traditionally blame the Devil for any sort of personal misfortune, including a car accident.[171]

In Osodi's *Devil's Dexterity #1* (fig. 2.3), a rusted, empty car sits in the middle of dirt field, outlined with lush green leaves and tall trees in the background.[172] The color of the orange rusts contrasts the brown dirt beneath it and the green landscape behind it. The car breaks the horizon line of the distant trees and accents the setting sun and pale blue sky. The blurred Devil figure, present near the car, is partially obstructed, but the horns protruding from the head are visible. The distortion links to photography's supposed ability to show the essence of the invisible. The Pentecostal movement outside Lagos has popularized the belief that the Devil, and individuals connected to him, is to blame for any personal misfortune, including physical injury or death.[173] Thus, one can assume that

---

170 Ibid.

171 Brigit Meyer, "'Delivered from the Powers of Darkness' Confessions of Satanic Riches in Christian Ghana" *Africa; Journal of the International African Institute* 65, no. 2 (1995): 238-40; Brigit Meyer, "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 455-57.

172 All of the images are untitled.

173 Uwem Essia, "The Social Economy of Child Witch Labeling in Nigeria: The Case of Akwa Ibom State," *Science Journal of Psychology* (2012): 2-3.

the Devil presence in Osodi's photograph is linked to the past destruction of the car and any possible dead inhabitants.

Mirroring Nkanga's concerns about car wrecks, Osodi writes that the series is about the problem of car crashes in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria, and it also "explore[s] the vulnerability of life and the tragic beauty of the landscape."[174] The photographer considers the fringes of Lagos as a place of great beauty but also as a place of death. He suggests that drivers or passengers can die easily if they are not vigilant in the way they drive or if they do not appease the spirits through prayers and sacrifices. Unfortunately, even if sacrifices or amulets are made for protection, road accidents kill thousands of Lagos migrants annually. The government does not do enough to mitigate the issue, so the people blame the Devil for the epidemic.[175] There are few quality driver education programs. Individuals often bribe a state employee for a driver's license. Roads are often in inadequate condition because there is a lack of institutional machinery for proper maintenance.[176]

Osodi creates a characterization of the fallen angel by using a person in a costume, suggesting human fallacy is ignored in automobile deaths. This is not to say there could be no spiritual cause in road accidents. Both Osodi and Nkanga's series offer Lagos's periphery as a space where spirits and the Devil cross on Earth. However, Osodi

---

174 George Osodi, *Devil's Dexterity*, 2008: http://georgeosodi.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/DEVILS-DEXTERITY-2008/G0000tBkdVaaPTXY/I0000QleD4IhOpDc

175 Nigeria has 8,000-10,000 motor vehicle related deaths annually. Of that number Lagos State, which includes metropolitan Lagos, has 32 deaths per 1,000 people annually. The statistics were taken from 1980 to 2003 and show with the increase in population is a corresponding increase in vehicular deaths. Augustus Atubi and Patience Onokala, "Contemporary Analysis of Variability in Road Traffic Accidents in Lagos State, Nigeria," 14.

176 Ibid, 18-19.

questions whether the invisible figures are also convenient scapegoats for a very visible problem. Both artists demonstrate a concern for Lagos' future and its populations as human movement into the periphery increases. Not only will there be higher numbers of road accidents, but there is a general apathy as to how the accidents occur and how to alleviate them.

By photographing the car wrecks in *Road Series*, Nkanga utilizes the medium as a form of mourning. The blurry quality of the pictures indicates an incomplete memory or fragmentation, which can be read as the artist creating a distant form of grieving for her mother and any other deaths occurring along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. Nkanga did not capture the car wrecks in a clear manner so she could create a general impression rather than recreate her personal experience. She was trying to provoke an emotional response in the viewer about car accidents in Lagos. The photograph is a frozen moment without any context, freeing the viewer to create his or her own story. The photograph's hazy characteristics allude to an unclear memory or dream. Memories are often described as "capricious, error-prone, and partial,"[177] Nkanga therefore references the accident that killed her mother and any others that may have occurred along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

In using the *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* as a form of mourning rather than in celebration, as is more commonly done with photography today, Nkanga places her work in conversation with the historic Western tradition of *memento mori* (literally, "remember thy death"). In medieval Europe, the term applied to objects and images symbolizing

---

[177] Alison Winter, *Memory: Fragments of a Modern History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012): 1.

death, such as a human skeleton or a representation of the Grim Reaper. An example of an early *memento mori* is a sixteenth-century painting by Dutch artist Aelbert van der Schoor, *Still Life with Skulls* (c. 1650). In the painting are six skulls and fragments of bone sitting on a ledge or table near a candle, a small hourglass, and a small ledge with books (fig. 2.6). The skulls are posed to see them from different angles, with a jaw bone and several arm and leg bones situated in-between. The skulls are overt symbols of human death. A cluster of them together suggests the demise of the body in plurality. Schoor places more subtle representations of death in the scene: the hourglass and the candle. Both are man-made objects, indicators of time, and symbols of human mortality. Situated together, the objects indicate that the end of life is inevitable. Time is passing; it will continue to do so until a person takes his or her final breath and his or her body begins its next transformation from life to death.

Memento mori was later applied in nineteenth-century Europe and the United States to objects, paintings and photographs that allowed living family members to remember their deceased loved ones as they were in life. The term's definition shifted from a more gruesome, fearful understanding of death to one of remembrance and a celebration of life.[178] Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* is a contemporary variation of *memento mori*; her image references death and remembrance, but is not a personal keepsake. The photograph is not about celebration, but mourning. The image allows the

[178]Art historian Dan Meinwald describes *memento mori* as "images [that] are graphic demonstrations of the fact that death was not only a more frequent, but a far more familiar occurrence in medieval Europe that it is today. They do not merely represent death, but a conception of death, and one that is characteristic of a specific time and place." Dan Meinwald, "*Memento Mori*: Death in Nineteenth Century Photography," *CMP Bulletin* 9, no. 4 (1990): 1-2.

artist to grieve for her mother, while also calling attention to the possible unknown, ongoing deaths outside of metropolitan Lagos.

Another way to approach Nkanga's use of photography is to consider how Western scholars view the medium as both dead and alive. This theory further emphasizes the artist's representation of death. As W.J.T. Mitchell argues "we need…to grasp both sides of the paradox of the image: that it is alive – but also dead…"[179] The photograph is in-between life and death; its very existence keeps alive the memory of the person, place or event within the frame; but it is also dead because the moment it captured has passed and can never happen again. Mitchell compares photographs to mummies and vampires, former living things resurrected.[180] The photograph is not static, but liminal, because in creating a visual representation, the original form is dead, but still resurrected through the resulting object.[181] Nkanga's use of photography to represent the outskirts of Lagos is not to depict that landscape as undead, but as an in-between space, a gateway for the living and dead to intersect with each other.

---

179 W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005): 32.

180 Ibid, 78-79.

181 Mitchell is not the first scholar to suggest that photography is a form of limbo between life and death, or a representation of transition. Walter Benjamin argues in his oft-cited 1935 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* that when mechanical reproductions are made, the original object loses its "aura" or authenticity. The reproductions force a loss of originality, changing the context of the original, as it is no longer tied to its ritualistic context or to that of the hand of the marker. The reproduction is now free to have new modern contexts such as being purely a work of art for arts sake or an association with politics. In addition, Roland Barthes in his famous book *Camera Lucida* writes of the intersection of life and death through the taking of a photograph. For him, each photographic image is "the return of the dead" because once the photograph is taken it is the end of a particular moment and it is only seeing that depiction later that the original moment comes alive again. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 1237-39; Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981): 9.

Nkanga's implication of death through her use of photography also connects to the legacy of the medium as a tool in mourning rituals through West Africa. Within Yoruba society, photographs are not just intimate forms of familial remembrances, but large public ones in funerary practices. Art historian Babatunde Lawal writes on the art of the "living dead" in Yoruba funerary practices. Traditionally, weeks after the corpse of the deceased figure is buried, there is a second burial ceremony of a wooden effigy of the deceased individual. The effigy is paraded around town and then buried. An effigy is required, since the second burial represents the final end of the human existence of the deceased. Lawal notes photography replaced the sculptural effigies as it gave a more accurate likeness and is easier to recreate.[182] Yoruba mourning rites are not purely historic, since they still continue in the contemporary era.

Finally, the Yoruba practice of *twinning* photography is also used in the mourning rituals of twins and triplets. Art historian Stephen Sprague writes that twins are revered by the Yoruba because they are "sacred children with connections to the spirit world [and] it is especially important to show them proper respect."[183] Traditionally, Ibeji sculptures (fig. 2.7) are built when a twin, or both twins, dies in a family. The sculptures are figures carved from wood, approximately 21-37 centimeters, having male or female genitalia depending on gender representation.[184] If the family adheres to the practice of ancestral worship the sculpture, or sculptures, is, or are, placed on a shrine, participating

---

182 Babatunde Lawal, "The Living Dead: Art & Immortality among the Yoruba of Nigeria," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 47, no. 1 (1977): 52.

183 Stephen Sprague, "Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba See Themselves," *African Arts* 12, no. 1 (1978): 180.

184 Anthony White, "The Trouble with Twins: Image and Ritual of the Yoruba ère ìbejì," in *emaj: online journal of art* 5 (2010): 3.

in rituals and ceremonies as its spirit is still engaged with the family.[185] Even though the child is physically dead, he or she is not truly gone, only invisible to the human eye, and thus, he or she is able to participate in the lives of the living. Photographs began to replace the carved figures of the ibeji tradition starting in the 1930s when studio portraiture became affordable enough for families to commission portraits.[186]

If one of the twins dies before his or her portrait is taken, the remaining twin will take the photograph alone. The photographer, however, will print the image twice as if both twins were sitting side by side. The situation is more complex if one of the twins is of a different sex. An archival photograph from the 1960s (fig. 3.8) shows a rare example of triplets. The male twins died, so their living sister took a singular picture in a set of their clothes and one of her own. The photographer situated the images side-by-side to "conceal the line blending the two separate exposures in order to maintain the illusion of twins sitting together in a single photograph."[187] If one of the children should die after his or her portrait was taken, the image acts in the same manner as the ibeji sculpture. The photograph is more than just an image to remember him or her; it is a spiritually inhabited participant. The Yoruba use of the image of the deceased is another example of the medium being alive and dead. The photograph is now the embodiment of the deceased, a spirit that is part of both the human and the spirit worlds. Photography encapsulates the idea of bridging two states of being. Nkanga is focused on the

185 Stephen Sprague, "Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba See Themselves," 180-1.
186 Ibid, 173.
187 Ibid, 180.

borderlands of Lagos as a site where transformation from human to spirit may take place. Her photographs present the area as a fluid space bridging two worlds simultaneously.

Considering the Western usage of photography in mourning rituals, the living have historically used the medium to remember the life and memories of the deceased. With the introduction of daguerreotype in 1839, photographs became highly popular because of their "truthful representation." Postmortem photography was a genre of portraits primarily of children after their death. High levels of infant mortality often prevented photographs when the child was alive, so he or she was positioned to look asleep instead of dead.[188] An example of post mortem photograph is an untitled and undated tintype of a newborn baby in an elaborately decorated frame (fig. 3.9). The baby is in a small bed surrounded by flowers and covered with a small quilt. The baby's eyes are closed, almost as if he or she is asleep rather than deceased. The photograph allows the parents to remember their child in a seemingly pleasant moment, even if the situation is a lie. The photograph is not actually trying to represent death, but a false depiction of life. It is a much different representation of death than Schoor's painting two centuries earlier since the painter is confronting the viewer with his or her own mortality.

Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* is in conversation with both the Western and Yoruba traditions of utilizing photography as forms of remembrance. Unlike Yoruba photography, which celebrates the human life of the depicted person and their transition into spiritual ancestry, and unlike the Western postmortem images, Nkanga returns to an earlier depiction of *memento mori* by confronting the idea of death. She then subverts that

---

[188] Dan Meinwald, "*Memento Mori*: Death in Nineteenth Century Photography," 8-9.

tradition by referring to death through symbols of how one can be killed, vis-à-vis the danfo, and where the death could have occurred, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, as opposed to representations of the human body. Her images incorporate references to Yoruba spirits suggesting that this seemingly modern location is still a bridge connecting worlds in which spirits or deities can affect the lives of the living.

Nkanga's repeated indications of death in *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* and other images in *Road Series* implies that the human and spirit interaction is not in balance. Residential and commercial enterprises developing in the rural areas of Lagos are signs that Lagos' economic progress is causing more harm than good. The Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, an emblem of Westernized progress, causes communities to be displaced through the destruction of the environment, dwellings, and sacred spaces. Nkanga's *Road Series* thus represents Lagos as an uneasily expanding city. It expands along roads leading to the interior of Nigeria, and with each new development, there is the possibility of a physical and spiritual confrontation. The artist shows the more sinister nature of urban modernization. In presenting the possibility of death on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway via the car accidents, Nkanga's *Road Series* photographs symbolically show the harm that progress can do to people and that it is not necessarily the ideal it is believed to be.

The Road to the Periphery

Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan* speaks to Lagos as a physical crossroads, with the city expanding further into the interior of Lagos State. The setting of the image, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, is one of the two main areas developers have targeted as new

sites for real estate.[189] A trio of Nigerian researchers recently analyzed how several "peri-urban" communities have developed along the freeway. The researchers defined "peri-urban" as "areas surrounding the cities within a daily commuting distance from the core and characterized by high interaction with it."[190] Scholar Ranjith Dayaratne describes these communities as 'transition zones' between the urban center and the agriculture margins. These zones are usually built by groups of the working poor employed in informal positions such as danfo drivers or street hawkers. Dayaratne also believes peri-urban zones are an inevitable consequence of urbanization in developing countries because of the stark economic extremes between the wealthy and the poor and the lack of public services for the working classes.[191]

In Lagos, between 2001 and 2006, an estimated 30,000 people found homes in different settlements around the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway as a result of metropolitan Lagos' population saturation. There are at least eight settlements of various sizes: six with 2,500-5,000 inhabitants and two with populations of 10,000.[192] The majority of settlement inhabitants (70%) are males between the ages of 20 and 40. They are predominately unemployed migrants who could not afford to live within Lagos proper.[193]

---

189 Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 316.

190 Taibat Lawanson, Omoayena Yadua, and Idris Salako, "Environmental Challenges of Peri-Urban Settlements in the Lagos Megacity," Remixing the City: Towards Sustainability and Resilience? (paper presented at the 17th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society, Schwechat, Austria, May 14-16, 2012): 275.

191 Ranjith Dayaratne and Raja Samarawickrama, "Empowering communities in the peri-urban areas of Colombo," *Environment and Urbanization* 15, no. 1 (April 2003): 101-03.

192 Taibat Lawanson, Omoayena Yadua, and Idris Salako, "Environmental Challenges of Peri-Urban Settlements the Lagos Megacity," 278.

193 Ibid, 279.

Groups of working- and middle-class people are moving to the outskirts of Lagos because the city is highly overpopulated; thus, the cost of buying a home or land for a home has become prohibitive for most. The average cost for a regular plot of bare land in Lagos is between ₦3,000,000 and ₦10,000,000 ($24,000-$80,000), while the federal minimum wage is ₦7,500 ($60) per month.[194] There is little land available to purchase since the Lagos State government owns all land not under private ownership. The Nigerian Land Use Act of 1978 dictates that "all land comprised in the territory of each State in the Federation are hereby vested in the Governor of that State and such land shall be held in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provisions of the this Act."[195] Therefore, according to the law, the governor has the right to use land in any way he or she wishes, ostensibly for the benefit everyone in the state. Unfortunately, this benefit is skewed towards the wealthy, especially if the government sells land to affluent private developers to build international corporate headquarters or luxury dwellings.

Lagos has become increasingly expensive for the middle and working classes since the election of Ahmed Tinubu in 1999. Tinubu stated his administrative goals as: (a) to recreate the city's wealth, (b) to create jobs, (c) to provide mass affordable housing, (d) to reduce poverty, and (e) to reinstate "law and order" to the city and the rest of the state after two previous decades of financial mismanagement.[196] He inherited a state coming out of a drastic economic decline, including inflation, due to a reduction in oil

---

194 Morka, "A Place to Live; A Case Study of the Ijora-Badia Community in Lagos, Nigeria," 6.

195 Land Use Act, Chapter 202, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990, Part 1: www.nigeria-law.org/lLand%20Use%20Act.htm

196 Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 312.

exports and high international debt. As Tinubu looked for ways to turn the city and the state around, there was little formal housing for its population.[197] The "Master Plan for Metropolitan Lagos" (1980-2000) stated that the city needed 1.4 million additional housing units, with 1 million of those units specifically for working-class families. By 2000, only 10% of those homes were actually built, with 91% of the population of Lagos State being categorized as the working poor. Therefore, with such a large deficit in housing, people began to build informal homes and communities on whatever available land they could find.[198]

Unfortunately, the lack of formal land ownership for the working class puts individuals in poorer communities in tenuous situations; they can be evicted at any time. Despite Tinubu stating he was an advocate for low-income public housing, he actually forced out thousands of people living in informal communities in the city. One such example is the removal of the Ijora-Badia community in 2003. Since 1990 Ijora-Badia was a community of over 3,000 people near the seaport area of Apapa. The area was desirable as it was close to industrial companies allowing inhabitants access to gainful employment.[199] The Apapa residential and commercial areas were stretched thin, with developers looking for land to build on. Efforts were focused on Ijora-Badia because of

---

[197] In 1985 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank instituted a structural adjustment program (SAP) that would allow Nigeria to pay back its international debts. It was implemented in 1986 and had devastating effects on the average Lagosian. The nation was spending rough 30% of its ADP on the debt, and it increased the costs of imports, which reduced a lot of national industries' capacity, causing reduced wages and unemployment in both private and public companies. The national currency became devalued and basic expenses therefore increased. Finally, national infrastructures, such as light, water and housing, were reduced and not maintained, many of which were actually sold off to private companies. Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 215-220.

[198] Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 316.

[199] Morka, "A Place to Live; A Case Study of the Ijora-Badia Community in Lagos, Nigeria," 8.

its close proximity. Eviction notices from the government began in 1996, but they were not enforced until several years later, once Tinubu was in office. Despite the community filing a lawsuit with the Lagos State court system to reinstate their fundamental rights to the land, Tinubu's administration mobilized bulldozers to destroy all standing dwellings.[200] It is not clear where the evictees moved afterwards; however, it is safe to assume they went wherever there was available land.

Individuals unable to buy land to build homes or pay landlords their required one to two years worth of upfront rent[201] began to create more low-cost communities further inland, where land was available and less expensive. The area surrounding the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway was ideal; there was plenty of land for development relatively close to the city and accessible by public transportation. The landscape in Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan* shows no visible signs of construction, indicating the potential for construction projects. The danfo in the scene also symbolically foreshadows the change occurring in the landscape. The inhabitants in the settlements along the Expressway need physical access to Lagos proper for employment. Yet the presence of new communities further inland continues to expand the borderlands around the city.

There is no indication in the image to inform the viewer if Nkanga is pleased or displeased with Lagos' expansion. If the distortions in the scene are symbols of spirits and the danfo is a symbol of death, one can infer that the artist is projecting a pessimistic tone to the city's development. Nkanga's feelings on the transformation of the outskirts

---

[200] Ibid, 9-12.

[201] Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Antwerp, Belgium, July 15, 2014.

of Lagos are clearer in a later series on a similar part of the city. In *Untitled #1*[202] (fig. 2.10) from Nkanga's *Things Have Fallen* series (2004-05), the artist presents a beautiful stretch of rural land along the Lekki-Epe Expressway. The Lekki-Epe Expressway is one of the other main areas for future development in the city. It runs fifty kilometers from Victoria Island into the interior of the Lekki Peninsula.[203]

Nkanga's image is of a small valley setting with numerous types of vegetation in the foreground, mid-ground, and background. The plants vary in height, drawing the eye all around the frame to varying shades of green and gold. In the center of the frame is a partial view of a stained cement wall that marks off part of the land. Several feet to the right, though hard to discern due to the plant life surrounding it, is a small cement shack. The smoothness of the material contrasts with the rugged and textured terrain that surrounds it, drawing the eye directly to it. The horizontal shape of the wall mimics the low laying shrubbery in the foreground, while monochromatic colors contrast the similarly colored vegetation directly in front of it.

The wall in the middle of the landscape is a symbol of a person's ownership of that landscape and one's ability to modify it on a personal level. If the situation took place in the center of the city, a person would also see graffiti on the wall with the words "this land is not for sale, beware 419" (419 is the Nigerian police code for fraud). Associated with wire and bank scams, this code is also used for real estate malfeasance,

---

202 All of the images in this series are untitled. I added the sequential numbering for clarity.

203 Udeh Nwannebuike and Onwuka Onuka, "Transforming Road Infrastructure in Nigeria – Revisiting the Public Private Partnership Option," *International Journal of Development Research* 5, no. 7 (July 2015): 5115.

where a person is sold land or a house already owned by someone else.[204] Moreover, the shack by the wall in the photograph is likely the workspace for a "megad," the colloquial term for a Hausa security guard who maintains the property.[205] *Untitled #1* represents what Nkanga alludes to in *Tollgate to Ibadan #10*: the landscape outside the city is changing into a more populated area as individuals and families try to build in unexploited areas.

The transformation of the Lagos landscape is imbalanced. Though Nkanga's photograph seems picturesque, the markers of humanity and nature appear to be in harmony; in reality, they are not. The cement buildings are glaringly obvious within the frame, not situated with the plant life surrounding it, as if nature was making the structure a part of itself. Instead, the building is devoid of debris or graffiti, suggesting that someone is taking care of it. The structure is a symbol of the encroachment of humanity into nature, being changed as needed. The lack of subtlety in this photograph as opposed to *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* suggests that Nkanga is resisting the expansion of the city into the periphery.

Her concern for how Lagos is transitioning also comes through with the title of her second series *Things Have Fallen*. The series title takes its name from Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*, which takes its title from the first stanza of *The Second Coming* by Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1919).[206] Yeats' poem is a foreboding tale of the

---

[204] Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Berlin, Germany June 22, 2013; Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 316-17.

[205] Interview with Otobong Nkanga, Berlin, Germany, June 22, 2013.

[206] "Turning and turning in the widening gyre, The falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed, and everywhere The Ceremony of innocence is drowned; The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity." William Yeats, "The Second

Second Coming, or the Day of Judgment, within Christianity. The poem was written after the end of WWI. Yeats links the devastation and chaos caused by war with the coming of a great beast to make a spiritual judgment on humanity.[207]

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a fictional narrative of the downfall of protagonist Okonknow during the societal change of an Igbo community in eastern Nigeria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nkanga's *Things Have Fallen* deals with environmental change, and as Achebe's character comes to a tragic end, one similarly wonders if the artist sees the same progression for Lagos. The artist may fear that the greenery on the outskirts will be destroyed for more cement structures. It was done in Nkanga's childhood neighborhood of Yaba, a former borderland area of Lagos. The artist grew up around Queens College, where her mother worked as a teacher. Yaba was one of the first planned neighborhoods on the mainland since it was located directly across from Victoria Island and Lagos Island.[208] The family lived in a bungalow-style house on the campus. Nkanga has fond memories of this home with shutters, massive trees, cool breezes, and even a garden. Large plots and gardens sadly no longer exist, because of the construction within the city limits. Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* and *Untitled #1* predict Lagos' expansion into rural areas of the city. The natural land may soon be gone if development continues. Nkanga's emphasis on the environment is indicative of Lagos'

Coming," in *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats Volume I: The Poems: Revised Second Edition* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1996): 187.

[207] Paul D. Deane, "Metaphors of center and periphery in Yeats' *The Second Coming*," *Journal of Pragmatics* 24 (1995): 632.

[208] While there were communities already living on the mainland, the colonial government commissioned Albert Thompson, a journeyman architect-planner, to build an estate for the growing African staff in the colonial administration. He planned a housing estate in Yaba in 1926. The neighborhood continued to grow afterwards. R.K. Home, "Town Planning and Garden Cities in the British Colonial Empire 1910-1940," 30-31; Margaret Peil, *Lagos: The City is the People*, 18.

growth without forethought for the city's future and its inhabitants. Since *Things Have Fallen* was taken a few years after *Road Series*, one wonders whether the earlier series was a prelude to the latter?

The danfo, being the predominant and cheapest form of public transportation, and the sliver of concrete road in the foreground of *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* allude to the social segregation occurring in the Lagos outskirts. There is no accurate count for these vehicles in the city; however, the Commissioner for Transportation for Lagos State estimates that there were 35,000 to 50,000 danfo drivers in the state.[209] The buses are poorly maintained, usually carrying at least twelve individuals, making rides uncomfortable and dangerous. The seats are wooden benches, with no seatbelts. Stops are frequent and quite jarring. After learning to drive from a friend or family member, most drivers do not have valid licenses, having paid for them with illegal documentation or bribes to an official.

Yet, citizens frequent them daily. In a BBC article, a Lagosian who commuted into the city regularly on danfos was quoted as saying: "Many of us know most of the buses are death traps, but since we can't afford the expensive taxi fares, we have no choice but to use the buses."[210] The interviewees' statement demonstrates that danfos are markers of social status. A person takes public transportation because of affordability, not necessarily because of desire. The placement of the danfo in Nkanga's photograph is an indirect nod to the periphery being an area for the working classes since they must use buses to commute to and from the city.

---

[209] "Another 100 Buses Seized in Lagos, SEE Why," February 17, 2014 (accessed August 10, 2016): www.natalagoschannel10.gov.ng/2014/02/17/community/another-100-buses-seized-in-lagos-see-why/

[210] "On the buses in Lagos," February 28, 2001, BBC News (accessed August 10, 2016): newsbbc.co.uk/2/hi/Africa/1186572.stm.

Nkanga's representation of the borderlands of Lagos, as opposed to the core, addresses an important gap within the city's discourse. Scholars writing on Lagos focus almost exclusively on the urbanization happening in the Central Business District (CBD) and neighborhoods within metropolitan Lagos, not its impact in the peripheral regions.[211] Researchers are primarily interested in the issues of housing, urban planning, transportation, and public-private partnership initiatives.[212] Nkanga's images are a visual example of yet another avenue of scholarship on Lagos, the effect of the city's expansion on undeveloped areas.

Recent scholarship on the Pentecostal, Christian, and Islamic movements occurring in Nigeria is one area of research given primacy in studies of Lagos' peri-urban spaces. Communities of thousands of people are building mega churches and mosques along the Ibadan-Lagos Expressway. According to scholar Marloes Janson, construction began in the 1980s during the height of the national recession due to the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). The SAP resulted in neo-liberal reforms, such as the

---

211 The only article I found that focuses on the "peri-urban" zone around Lagos is Taibat Lawanson, Omoayena Yadua, and Idris Salako, "Environmental Challenges of Peri-Urban Settlements the Lagos Megacity." There is another article looking at the same area surrounding Ibadan, focusing on households led by women. Oluremi Jaiyebo, "Women and Household Sustenance: Changing livelihoods and survival strategies in the peri-urban areas of Ibadan," *Environment and Urbanization* 15, no. 1 (April 2003): 111-20.

212 Some books and articles that reference the growth of informal communities in Lagos are: Ibidun Adelekan, "Vulnerability of Poor Urban Coastal Communities to Flooding in Lagos, Nigeria," *Environment and Urbanization* 22, no. 2 (October 2010): 434-39; Tunde Agbola, "The Housing Construction Process in Nigeria," *Cities* (May 1988): 188-91; Tunde Agbola and A.M. Jinadu, "Forced Eviction and Forced Relocation in Nigeria: The Experience of those evicted from Maroko in 1990," 271-88; O.E. Aluko, "The Impact of Urbanization on Housing Development: the Lagos Experience, Nigeria," *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management* 3, no. 3 (2010): 65-71; Ademola Braimoh and Takashi Onishi, "Spatial Determinants of Urban Land Use Changes in Lagos, Nigeria," *Land Use Policy* 24 (2007): 506-07; E.C. Emordi and O.M. Osiki, "Lagos: the 'villagized' city," *Information, Society and Justice* 2, no. 1 (December 2008): 98-104; Matthew Gandy, "Planning, Anti-Planning and the Infrastructure Crisis Facing Metropolitan Lagos," 380-86; Adetokunbo Illesanmi, " Urban Sustainability in the Context of Lagos Mega-City," 242-46; Taibat Lawanson, Omoayena Yadua, and Idris Salako, "Environmental Challenges of Peri-Urban Settlements the Lagos Megacity," 275-85; Oka Obono, "A Lagos Thing: Rules and Realities in the Nigerian Megacity," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 8, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2007): 32-34.

privatization of the national economy, the deregulation of the market, as well as the decline of national infrastructures, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs. Citizens turned to their spiritual leaders for answers to their daily socioeconomic issues, especially jobs, wealth, and housing. With little public infrastructure and high unemployment, churches and mosques became "corporatized," helping to create jobs, build homes, and provide schooling for parishioners.[213]

These religious centers continue to grow in the twenty-first century. Massive estates have been built, containing churches, mosques, schools, and colleges. Amenities include dormitories, hotels, restaurants, banks, Internet cafes, and health centers. The estates are self-funded and self-maintained, as well as drawing hundreds of thousands of parishioners for services, often causing complete blockages of the Expressway.[214] The religious leaders chose to build along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, because of affordability and uncultivated land, giving rise to estates that are sometimes the size of several football fields. It is not clear how many churches have been built along the Expressway outside Lagos, but one of the fastest-growing ones, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, founded in 1952, draws an excess of 300,000 people every first Friday of the month for its Holy Ghost Night.[215] The Expressway is thus now labeled the "Spiritual Highway," due to all of the religious centers surrounding the highway and the vast number of parishioners that visit them.[216]

---

213 Marloes Janson, *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos*, 5.
214 Ibid, 5.
215 Ebenezer Obadare, "Pentecostal Presidency? The Lagos-Ibadan 'Theocratic Class' and the Muslim 'Other,'" *Review of African Political Economy* 110 (2006): 672.
216 Marloes Janson, *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos*, 5.

In 2013 Janson began working with a Nigerian photojournalist Akintunde Akinleye (b. 1971) to create a series of images along the Expressway leading up to, and inside, two of the prayer camps, Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM Prayer Camp) and Nasr Allah al-Fatih[217] Society of Nigeria (NASFAT). In two images from the untitled series, Akinleye shows the landscape and Expressway leading to one of the camps. In the first photograph entitled *Spiritual Highway* (2.11), the photographer presents both sides of the Expressway filled with cars, buses, and trucks. In the background is an advertising billboard with barely discernable buildings. The focus here is the Expressway rather than the churches. The viewers see the road congested with vehicles going into and out of the city. The exhaust from the trucks obscures the background scenery, but one can see that the entire area is filled with structures and telephone lines. Though the photograph is not representative of the center of the city, the numerous cars and buildings in the landscape shows how much of the area has been utilized.

Certain objects in the frame mark the road as a connecting point between the "periphery" and the "city center." In the foreground is a large red bus with a "Lagbus" sign designating its route as heading towards the city. The bus is one of the newer government-sanctioned forms of public transportation. Not far behind the bus, though, on the left side of the middle ground is a danfo, clearly recognizable from the Jakande-yellow color. The billboard, located in the top right corner, signifies a connection to the center of Lagos. It advertises a beverage of some kind. Traditionally, advertisers target

[217] The title translates to "There is no help except from Allah." Ibid, 6.

their campaigns to locations where they can reach a large amount of consumers, and driving along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway is a perfect location to reach a broad audience going in and out of the city. However, despite all of the items of commodity in the image, Akinleye titled the work *Spiritual Highway*. He is perhaps indicating that despite all of the consumerism happening along the Expressway and around it, the road's primary function is for parishioners to get to and from their place of worship.

Akinleye's photograph of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway is very different from Nkanga's. The former gives the viewer a more panoramic perspective of the road. Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* is a much more focused shot looking at the side of the Expressway not in front of it. Both images incorporate an example of the sandy dirt "shoulder lane." However, in Nkanga's image the camera is looking from the perspective of the passenger side, in motion, while in Akinleye's the photographer is standing within the shoulder with the camera facing the highway. Akinleye seems to want to give his viewers the most information possible, while Nkanga gives very little, letting a person's imagination take precedence.

Another Akinleye's expressway photo, *MFM Prayer City billboard* (2.12), is more framed than the previous one, focusing on billboard advertising at one of the prayer camps. Cars, trucks, and vans are marginally visible in the lower left foreground, but the brightly colored sign dominates the photograph. The bottom of the board is partially obscured by a smaller sign that states "Slow Down!!! You're Approaching MFM Prayer City." The sign and board work together highlighting how close the driver is to getting spiritual guidance and salvation. The billboard even emphasizes that prayer goes on

twenty-four hours a day. Akinleye's focus is on the billboard giving viewers evidence why the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway is called the "Spiritual Highway."

Akinleye's focus on *MFM Prayer City billboard* is a subtle reminder of the physical change of the periphery of Lagos. With the area being filled with self-contained religious estates, the landscape is shifting from a rural setting into an urban one. The language on the billboard, "Prayer City," symbolizes that urbanization is occurring, albeit one based on religion and religious consumerism. Simultaneously, the billboard and photograph associates the area as another form of spiritual crossroads. The sign is a signifier of the MFM ministry, which provides "a do-it yourself gospel" to deliver worshippers from evil through aggressive prayers where one can "feel" the Holy Spirit.[218] The Lagos-Ibadan Expressway leads individuals to that holy experience, thus, its title of the "Spiritual Highway." In Akinleye's image, featuring a symbol of a person's spiritual transcendence, including an area that delivers the person to that state, the road and the outskirts of Lagos have become metaphysical crossroads.

In comparing Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* to Akinleye's *MFM Prayer City billboard*, both artists depict how Lagos' periphery is in a state of transition socially, economically, and spiritually. While Akinleye is focused on a particular aspect of that change, the development and expansion of prayer camps, Nkanga is interested in both the spiritual and physical changes in the area. Her earlier work in this area shows more information on the fluctuating borders of Lagos, as opposed to the development's impact on the center.

---

[218] Marloes Janson, *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos*, 6.

Conclusion

Whereas the first chapter was an investigation of Akinbode Akinbiyi's depiction of the visual transition of the center of Lagos through its architectural shifts and the hidden histories of public roads, this chapter explored the physical and metaphysical transformation of the outskirts of the city by Nigerian artist Otobong Nkanga. Nkanga depicts Lagos' twenty-first-century growth further inland into rural areas as conflicted and confrontational places between humanity, nature, and invisible spirits. Through a close reading of *Tollgate to Ibadan #10*, an image from the artist's first series on Lagos, *Road Series*, viewers see the periphery of the city as a space in flux as the man-made environment encroaches upon the natural environment and destroys sacred sites. While Lagosians continue to build residences, businesses, and prayer camps, because there is no room for these structures within the metropolitan area, they do not consider the older, invisible inhabitants who may also lay claim to that space. Nkanga subtly points to Yoruba deities and ancestors whose former altars have been destroyed, releasing them from their physical anchors to roam the major roadways. The same spirits that are prayed to for protection while driving and traveling can also cause havoc, even death, because humanity wishes to be in control of the same space where the spirits roam.

In *Road Series*, the outskirts of the Lagos environment is a crossroads between the visible and invisible worlds, and between nature and the urban environment. Nkanga's personal tragedy inspires a body of work that examines death occurring along public roads, entering and exiting the city, which is often blamed on demons, witches, and invisible spirits. Her use of photography to create images of distorted car wrecks is a part

of the legacy of the medium's use in Nigerian and Western mourning traditions; it serves as a symbol of life, death, and resurrection. Nkanga images bring those engagements into the twenty-first century, suggesting that as Lagos continues to grow and unknowingly destroy sacred environments, the conflict between humans and Yoruba deities will heighten, continuing to cause misfortune and death to living travelers.

Road Series references the artist's anxiety towards the development of the periphery. Citizens buy and section off large plots of land to build homes and businesses, but they do not do so with prudence. Miles of unexploited nature in rural areas are destroyed not for agricultural purposes, but for informal housing. The masses cannot afford to buy and build within the city proper, so individuals and families who are unable to live within the city limits are forced into the interior of Lagos State. They remain in a precarious situation as affluent developers are turning their eyes to those same locations for potential luxury construction.

Nkanga's photographs in *Road Series* and *Things Have Fallen* bring attention to the conflict between man and nature as Lagos' periphery develops. The artist presents a gloomy projection as the future of Lagos' "transition zone" by suggesting that migration into the interior causes construction that is destroying the environment. The working class is more concerned with their respective survival than with the destruction of nature. Sadly, individuals may not realize that the already existing environmental issues of flooding and erosion, which affects the center of the city, will eventually extend into the periphery. Nkanga's images show her preference for untouched nature, as continued building will cause further problems, since much of it is done without durable planning.

Nkanga's images bring up questions about whether the environment should be sacrificed for continued development of the city or whether there is a way for both to prosper for future generations.

Having now given two examples of representations of Lagos by Lagosians, in the final chapter, I will examine the cinematic work of Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. In his film *Lagos/Koolhaas*, viewers see Lagos as a spectacle of transformation and adaptation. Lagosians modify the city to grow and thrive in their economic pursuits, especially in light of the lack of public infrastructure. If citizens want to survive, they must use their own ingenuity and entrepreneurial skills to make it so. Fascinated with this new form of urban planning, Koolhaas, as a foreigner, highlights it through movement, interviews, and music.

REM KOOLHAAS

Rem Koolhaas (b. 1944) is a Dutch architect and urban planner, not a fine artist as Nkanga or Akinbiyi, though in the early part of his career, in the 1960s he was a screenwriter and actor with the Dutch film group *1, 2, 3. Groep*. He quickly left the world of cinema for architecture after attending a lecture about the relationship between cinema and architecture during his undergraduate studies.[219] Though with his later documentaries one can see how both mediums were influential in his life and practice.

He focuses on physical transformations in Lagos through architecture and organic urban planning at the beginning of the twenty-first century. While Nigerian artists Akinbiyi and Nkanga employed still photography, Koolhaas goes further by using film to present Lagosians moving through the city. Fascinated with what he sees as Lagos' frenetic pace, his documentary-style film *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2002) features manipulated footage of the city's public spaces as sites of multiplicity, ingenuity, and transgression as Lagosians adapt to their modern environment. Koolhaas becomes nearly overwhelmed by Lagos' hustle-and-bustle with bodies peddling wares in the streets, while darting in between cars, market women competing for clients, all amid a cacophony of car horns, screeching tires, and radio music blasting. Acknowledging his outsider status, Koolhaas includes interviews with seven different Lagosians of various classes taken between 2000 and 2001, all of whom present local perspectives.

---

[219] Roberto Gargiani, *Rem Koolhaas/OMA: The Construction of Merveilles* (Lausanne, Switzerland: EPFL Press, 2008): 3.

Koolhaas had no prior experience with the African continent. He turned to film to express his awe at what appeared to his unaccustomed eyes as a hectic hodge-podge of movement. Utilizing highly stylized, fast-paced editing techniques, he presents viewers with dazzling, highly impressionistic interpretations of the rapid-fire, contingent lifestyles that many contemporary working-class Lagosians were forced to adopt for economic survival. *Lagos/Koolhaas* places viewers alongside a European visiting twenty-first-century Lagos for the first time. The camera's perspective is two-fold. First, it follows Koolhaas as a participant observer[220] watching Lagos. The architect's project is then that of representation, as he selects from an array of concurrent human interaction in public spaces. Second, his project is also about audience reception as he unveils various ways in which local and non-local populations interpret the scenes. As Koolhaas observes daily life in Lagos and the different interactions between working-class and privileged Lagosians, he wants to emphasize these unique situations and forms of livelihood for his non-Lagosian (or non-Nigerian) audiences.

Koolhaas has previously catalogued his impressions of major cities from an outsider perspective. He was trained in architecture as a profession, with a research background in international urban planning.[221] His first, and most known publication,

---

[220] Participant observation is a long-standing data gathering technique in the field of anthropology, although one that has migrated into sociology. The technique is attributed to Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), who lived among the Melanesian people of the Kiriwina Islands off the New Guinean coast. He took part in the daily activities, rituals, and events, including speaking the local language and interacting with the community in which he lived in order to understand better the societies he was observing. Kathleen DeWalt and Bille DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (New York: Altamira Press, 2010): 259-262.

[221] Koolhaas has published several books on urban planning, modernization, and cities within Europe, the United States, and Asia. Some of his well-known solo and collaborative works are *Delirious New York* (1978), *S,M,L,XL* (1995), *Junkspace* (2001), *Project on the City I: Great Leap Forward* (2001), *Project on*

Delirious New York (1978), was "a retrospective manifesto on Manhattan."[222] Koolhaas tried to encapsulate Manhattan's unique history and various neighborhoods throughout the twentieth century for a European audience unfamiliar with the city. Koolhaas grew up in Rotterdam, Netherlands, although he spent several years in Jakarta, Indonesia, as a child. After receiving his degree in architecture from the School of Architecture in London in 1968, Koolhaas began working as a screenwriter and actor with a group called *1,2,3 Groep* in the same year.[223] He founded his architectural firm OMA in Rotterdam in 1975 and AMO, a research and design studio, in 1998.[224] In 1995, he joined Harvard University's School of Architecture and Design as a professor.

Koolhaas' began traveling to Lagos in 1998 as part of Project on the City (HPC), a multi-media, multi-city research project sponsored by the Harvard School of Design. He and his team were studying "a specific region or a general condition undergoing virulent change."[225] Koolhaas was aware of rapid, global urban population growth and questioned whether current architectural and planning discourse could handle these shifts.[226] Lagos was a case study for examining and describing how an African metropolis worked. He believed Lagos could be a model for future cities elsewhere.[227]

---

the City II: The Harvard Guide to Shopping (2001), *Considering Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture: What is OMA* (2003) *Content* (2004).

222 Rem Koolhaas *Delirious New York* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1994, 2nd edition): 9.

223 Roberto Gargiani, *Rem Koolhaas/OMA: The Construction of Merveilles*, 3.

224 OMA: oma.eu/projects/.

225 Rem Koolhaas, et.al, "Introduction," in *Mutations* (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2001): 19.

226 Rem Koolhaas, "Whatever Happened to Urbanism?" *Design Quarterly* 164 (1995): 28; republished from *S,M,L, XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995); Rem Koolhaas, "Fragment of a Lecture in Lagos," in *Under Siege: Four African Cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*, eds. Okwui Enwezor et al. (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2002): 175.

227 Rem Koolhaas, et.al, "Lagos," in *Mutations*, 652-53.

Koolhaas initially perceived the widespread garbage on the mainland and smoke from sawmills in lagoon waterways as "an aura of apocalyptic violence."[228] Yet, on subsequent visits over the next three years, as he interviewed locals, Koolhaas and his team realized that Lagosians had developed unconventional and elaborate social networks where informal economic systems provided necessities.[229] Koolhaas published his Lagos research in his book *Mutations* (2000); the film *Lagos/Koolhaas* followed two years later. A second film, *Lagos: Wide & Close*, was produced in 2005. Dutch filmmaker Bregtje van der Haak directed both films.[230]

Since its release in 2002 *Lagos/Koolhaas* received a great deal of supportive and antagonist criticism. Some scholars, such as sociologist Matthew Gandy, find Koolhaas' description and methodology of analyzing Lagos in the Harvard Project on the City as essentialist by both "de-historiciz[ing] and… depoliticize[ing] its experience."[231] Others argue that Koolhaas was trying to give agency back to Lagosians and that he resituates Lagos "from the margins of global urbanity to its center."[232] This chapter places Koolhaas' project within the middle of these debates, suggesting that the film draws attention to working-class life in Lagos due to the architect's unfamiliarity with informal economies. Despite making general audiences more aware of how working-class

---

228 Rem Koolhaas, "Fragment of a Lecture in Lagos," 175.

229 Ibid, 177.

230 Although van der Haak directed both films, she worked closely with Koolhaas on *Lagos/Koolhaas* and it is from his perspective that I am analyzing the films.

231 Matthew Gandy, "Learning from Lagos," *New Left Review* 33 (May 2005): 42; Laurent Fourcard, "Lagos Koolhaas and Partisan Politics in Nigeria," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 1 (2010): 1.

232 Tim Hecker, "The Slum Pastoral: Helicopter Visuality and Koolhaas's Lagos," *Space and Culture* 13, no. 256 (April 2010): 257; Stephen Marr, "Worlding and Wilding: Lagos and Detroit as Global Cities," *DSpace Repository* (2016): 16. Accessed online June 20, 2016 http://hdl.handle.net/2043/20446.

Lagosians survive through personal ingenuity, Koolhaas' representation is based on a juxtaposition between African cities and those in the West, reaffirming the former in an inferior position.

This chapter performs a close reading of one sequence from *Lagos/Koolhaas*: Koolhaas travels along one of Lagos' highways, experiencing the city's infamous "go-slow," a local term for traffic, and visiting Oshodi Market (fig. 3.1). Here Koolhaas highlights Lagos' street trading and market professions. There are voiceovers of the architect theorizing about the city as one "not of flow, but… [of] permanent congestion and stoppages."[233] Finally, viewers see and hear from several Lagosian of various classes speaking about their respective lives in Lagos. A television host refers to "the Lagos mentality" of agility, caution, and vigilance.[234]

The sequence is a good example of Koolhaas' focus on Lagos' "informal economy,"[235] where citizens reorganize public space for job opportunities. Lagos' informal economy increased with Nigerian corporate privatization in the 1980s and 1990s. Public companies laid off staff to alleviate costs, causing citizens to generate their own livelihoods.[236] Koolhaas initially believed that Lagos' informal systems were

---

233 Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos/Koolhaas*, directed by Bregtje van der Haak (Brooklyn, NY: Icarus Films, 2002), DVD.

234 Ibid.

235 Sociologist AbdouMaliq Simone states that the "informal sector" is an umbrella term for jobs and services falling outside the conventional organization and regulation of firms within African cities. The sector is popular with the working class because there is an easy of entry, especially for those without formal educations. An estimated 75% of basic needs are provided informally in the majority of African cities.
AbdouMaliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, 6, 24-25.

236 For a more detailed explanation on Structural Adjustment Programs in Nigeria and its impact on Lagos, see Chinwe Nwanna, "Gentrification in Nigeria: the case of two housing estates in Lagos," 312.

"disconnected from the global system,"[237] as he did not know of Alaba Market, which is engaged in international electronics trading. Once he spent time in Lagos and encountered these spaces, Koolhaas' perceptions on the city changed. He realized that these self-organizational systems were powerful entities with global connections, employing thousands of people.[238]

As will be discussed further in the chapter, European and American audiences may perceive *Lagos/Koolhaas* as a "spectacle of the Other."[239] Jamaican-born Stuart Hall developed this notion from Britain's mainstream media's interest in "differences" within British racialized communities.[240] He was investigating why ideas of "otherness" within British society fascinated popular culture in the late 1990s. Hall's theory relates to French theorist Guy Debord's definition of spectacle as "social relation[s] among people, mediate[d] by images."[241] Hall is not only interested in visual representation of Britain's black communities, but also in how various local and international audiences receive those images. Hall's examination of African diasporic communities in Britain provides a way to think through Koolhaas' fascination with, and representation of, Lagos' working-class, localized forms of economic survival.

Reception and Representation

One of the early sequences in *Lagos/Koolhaas* focuses on the "go-slow." The scene features clever ways by which entrepreneurial Lagosian traders take advantage of

---

237 Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos/Koolhaas*.
238 Ibid.
239 Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997): 225.
240 Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," 225-30.
241 Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995): 31.

two-to-three hour daily commutes between Lagos Island and the mainland. During peak morning and evening travel times, main roadways and highways are lined with traders selling products to commuters as cars slowly pass by. Koolhaas witnessed in Lagos "the greatest density of both traffic and human beings ever known to man, literally, unimaginable numbers of people."[242] The sequence consists of several scenes edited together into one continuous presentation.

The scene begins with a split-screen view of a major Lagos roadway. Two camera frames show an endless line of men selling drinks, snacks, DVDs, newspapers, books, and household items to drivers and passengers in cars, taxis, danfos (buses), and okada (motorbikes) (fig. 3.1). As bus and car drivers compete to overtake each other in stop-and-start traffic, okada drivers weave around vendors and larger cars, narrowly missing traders. Sellers yell, "Master don do dat," to speeding drivers, wanting to finalize a transaction.

The two camera angles show multiple sets of vendors simultaneously, amplifying individual action. On top is a forward view, capturing the stop-and-start motion of proceeding cars and traders in the middle of the frame walking or running alongside the vehicles and making deals. The camera jerks abruptly, mimicking the car's motion. A paperback spine on the bottom left edge of the frame is reflected on the glass, denoting the camera's position inside a moving vehicle. Filming took place through the front window. The bottom camera angles to the left. The frame shows cars, the Lagos

[242] Rem Koolhaas, "Fragment of a Lecture in Lagos," 179.

landscape, vendors, and items for sale. The different angles show viewers two different examples of what drivers and passengers see and experience during the daily commute.

The scene then shifts to a close-up view of Koolhaas lecturing about go-slows to a non-visible audience. He presents graphic maps of the city, discussing Lagos' "immobile condition" for efficient and effective trading (fig. 3.2). He states: "What was most characteristic about the city was that in its entirety [it was] in an almost immobile condition, with very occasional movement, and where a system of go-slow had the entire city in its grip and made it a city not of flow, but… [of] permanent congestion and stoppages."[243]

The image then returns to a singular view of the previous traffic scene. A young man faces the camera selling a snack pack to the non-visible cameraman (fig. 3.3). Another young boy, standing next to the trader, leans towards the camera begging for money. The scene cuts again, returning to Koolhaas' lecture. He presents an aerial photograph of Oshodi Market, with a train surrounded by an incredible density of human beings (fig. 3.4). He continues his discussion on local trading techniques. Koolhaas comments:

> What seemed like a completely random and improvised world…actually included a number of elaborate organizational networks. And you could see, for instance, the go-slow in itself was used and the spaces in-between cars was basically filled with traders, and that the path of the railway, that would still actually drive…was immediately…closed by a sea…of teeming human beings that, of course, were trading again in a very efficient way.[244]

---

[243] Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos/Koolhaas*.

[244] Ibid.

The scene shifts a final time to film footage from Oshodi Market, with an initial close-up of a train's exterior, surrounded by men and women selling food to the passengers. The train pulls out of the station with young men hanging off the sides. The camera lens pulls back, showing a wide, panoramic view of the same location (fig 3.5). The train moves into the horizon, back car door open, showing people standing, hanging onto the ceiling for support, with their luggage. Thousands of men, women and children stand close to the moving train, waiting for it to pass, then cross directly over the tracks to the other side of the market.

Here viewers see Lagosians on display from a Western perspective. Koolhaas was so inspired by the new sights of contingent lifestyle in Lagos that he pushed his response as the films' predominate narrative. Koolhaas played sequential tri-part roles. He emphasizes his observation skills through footage panning dozens of men lining streets, trading with commuters, and women selling at markets, highlighting itinerant trading. Split screens, panoramic points-of-view, film cuts presenting numerous traders, and Oshodi market's density and size, all reflect Koolhaas' editorial role of amplifying his response to Lagos for his viewers as a spectacle of local ingenuity within an overpopulated city, full of systemic economical extremes. Finally, his lecture scenes juxtaposed against Lagos' action present his participant role. He does not silently observe and film what he sees, but interacts with Lagosians, interviewing them as they interview him. Koolhaas does not negate Lagosian experiences, but they are secondary to his point of view. However, Koolhaas' audiences may respond differently to the architect's

representation depending on an individual's connection to Lagos and/or a contingent lifestyle.

Koolhaas' go-slow scene demonstrates local styles of exchange. Street trading has existed in Lagos since the early twentieth century, although Yoruba merchants and markets have pre-colonial roots within Trans-Saharan caravan routes.[245] Contemporary mobile marketing is a strategy for many traders, creating customer convenience and keeping overhead costs low, a necessity for individuals without sufficient capital for permanent structures.[246] Throughout the twentieth century, Lagos city officials repeatedly tried regulating markets and forcing traders to pay rent fees. Politicians moved against individuals creating "illegal" stalls selling foodstuffs and household items along major roadways because numerous vendors blocked traffic and larger expatriate merchants lost income, thus depriving the city and state of taxes. In 1929 the Secretary of the Lagos Town Council enacted a law banning street trading.[247] However, traders found ways around the ban, creating night markets, developing associations, using a vocal warning system when rumors of raids were heard so vendors could leave and return after police left, finding alternate locations, and paying officials to leave them alone.

Koolhaas' scene also shows numerous forms of physical mobility happening concurrently: human/motorized, running/stop-and-start, with traffic/against traffic, public transportation/private transportation. Traders walk and run alongside motorized vehicles,

---

[245] Stephan Golub and Jamie Hansen-Lewis, "Informal Trading Networks in West Africa: The Mourides of Senegal/the Gambia and the Yoruba of Benin/Nigeria," in *The Informal Sector in Francophone Africa: Film Size, productivity, and institutions* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2012): 182-89.
[246] Ibid, 187.
[247] Adebayo Lawal, "Markets and Street Trading in Lagos," 238.

moving against traffic, making sales with drivers and passengers. They display items while facing oncoming cars, calling to potential clients for a sale. Any driver's body language suggesting interest causes the seller to charge towards the vehicle, following it until the transaction is complete or until he realizes that nothing will occur.[248] Traders must be physically quick to make deals happen while cars are moving. Sometimes customers try driving away before paying, knowing a vendor is slower than a car. Commuters, on the other hand, travel in personal cars or in varying forms of public transportation, like danfos, okadas (motorbikes), trains, and taxis.

The sequences' ending scene at Oshodi Market also includes multiple forms of movement. The train is stationary at first, and then exits the station for its next destination (fig. 3.5). Traders move quickly, selling while the vehicle is immobile, strategically positioning themselves next to the tracks so customers can purchase prior to entering, as well as moving down the length of the cars selling efficiently. Market goers wait until the train has passed them before immediately crossing the tracks to get to the other side. In terms of representation, viewers see that Lagosians do not see passing trains in a tightly spaced market as an impediment, but simply another part of the contingent interplay comprising that location.

Koolhaas fixates on street trading and the different ways Lagosians move through the city during go-slows and outside markets due to his ignorance of how people live contingently. The situation in Lagos was new to Koolhaas; however, similar situations happen in Holland to marginalized Turkish and Moroccan migrant communities living in

[248] Beatrice Adenike Oloko, "Children's Street Work in Urban Nigeria: Dilemma of Modernizing Tradition," in *Cross-Cultural Roots of Minority Child Development*, eds., Patricia M. Greenfield and Rodney R. Cooking (New York: Psychology Press, 1994): 199.

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. These communities primarily work in informal businesses within their neighborhoods. Since the 1990s, The Netherlands' economy has been booming, with a national unemployment rate of 6%, while immigrants faced 18% unemployment.[249] Therefore, white Dutch citizens were primarily exempt from finding alternate forms of employment. Even when Dutch political officials enacted "immigrant entrepreneurship" policies in 1995, non-Dutch citizens lacked the capital, language knowledge, and resources to create brick-and-mortar businesses.[250] Koolhaas' affluent positionality made him more aware of socioeconomic differences between Rotterdam and Nigeria where shopping at brick-and-mortar shops was more common in Rotterdam than buying from street traders in Lagos.

Koolhaas represents spectacular Lagos through the cinematic medium. In an interview, Koolhaas stated: "There were many moments when we thought we had captured something truly amazing, but when we looked at the photos there was actually nothing" [because] "events have a tendency to disappear if you freeze them – if you try to capture them in photographs."[251] He continues: "Maybe the 'real event' in Nigeria is a process… a slow-motion form of survival."[252] The architect implies that photographic images of Lagos could not convey processes or events leading up to the framed event, making movement and mobility necessary. Film, a medium showing motion, was

---

[249] Robert Kloosterman, Joanne van der Leun, and Jan Rath, "Mixed Embeddedness: (In)formal Economic Activities and Immigrant Businesses in the Netherlands," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23, no. 2 (June 1999): 255.
[250] Robert Kloosterman, "Creating Opportunities: Polices Aimed at Increasing Openings for Immigrant Entrepreneurs in The Netherlands," *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 15 (2003): 176-77.
[251] Jennifer Siglet, "Interview with Rem Koolhaas," *Index Magazine*, 2000. Accessed online August 8, 2016, http://www.indexmagazine.com/interviews/rem_koolhaas.shtml.
[252] Ibid.

therefore a better to way present his Lagos research. It shows physical action of go-slows in real-time, something not visible in static images.

Koolhaas also uses film to highlight Lagosians walking along freeways, cutting through traffic, or sitting on motorbikes, all with a notion of "authenticity" through photographic imagery. Moreover, with film, viewers create an imagined sense of other sensations beyond visual and auditory ones. Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein wrote about "'montage elements' – touch[ing] literally every sense…"[253] He described various human senses participating with film: touch, smell, sight, hearing, movement and emotion, pointing out that cinema is a multi-sensory medium.[254] Viewers watching *Lagos/Koolhaas* can better imagine Koolhaas' bodily experience of Lagos traffic. Seeing the camera's abrupt stop-start movement, hearing car honks and vendors yelling, and seeing children begging, adds to the viewer's multisensory experience. By adding sounds to visual footage via cinema the mind generates an imagined perception of the other senses, smelling body sweat and gas exhaust, creating a more impactful, emotional response from the viewer.

Koolhaas does not rely on camera footage and sound alone. Koolhaas presents various forms of simultaneous movement between humans and motorized vehicles in the go-slow scene as way to demonstrate difference in Lagos from Western cities. Viewer's eyes roam up-and-down, left-to-right, comparing actions on both sides of the split screen. There is no singular focal point, as both frames show cars moving, vendors selling, and the urban landscape passing in front of the camera. Split screens are a contemporary

---

253 Sergei Eisenstein, *The Film Sense* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970): 73.
254 Ibid, 73.

cinema tactic conveying multiple streams of information happening simultaneously, capturing viewers' attention with visual attractiveness within a single frame.[255] The two portions of Koolhaas' frame show cars in motion, passing moving human beings, competing for the viewer's attention. Although the architect may be aware of citizens walking, taking public transportation, and driving cars or motorbikes, all at the same time, he recognizes that they are not competing with hundreds of human beings moving in street lanes. He edits his footage to emphasize his awed response for his audiences.

Koolhaas' incorporation of split screens as a cinematic device has a long tradition in European and American narrative cinema and contemporary video art. During the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, American film directors experimented with multiple screens within a single frame, creating spatial and temporal montages for visual dazzle and multiple, simultaneous perspectives. Nollywood films, Nigeria's video industry, did not develop until the late 1980s, and was not utilizing this technique.[256] One of the most famous Hollywood examples of split screens during the mid-twentieth century was the *Thomas Crown Affair* (1968), featuring Faye Dunaway and Steve McQueen. The film follows Dunaway's character, an insurance investigator, trying to prove that McQueen's corporate, millionaire playboy organized a bank heist in Boston.

A polo match scene where Dunaway and McQueen characters first interact demonstrates the wonder of film editing. A montage of polo players on horseback dissolves from a single frame into multiple ones, moving around the screen. The montage

---

[255] Jim Bizzocchi, "The Fragmented Frame: The Poetics of the Split-Screen," Published online 2009, web.mit.edu (accessed August 20, 2016): http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit6/papers/Bizzocchi.pdf.
[256] Jonathan Haynes, "Video Boom: Nigeria and Ghana," *Postcolonial Text* 3 no. 2 (2007): 1.

gives different points of view of the same moment juxtaposed against each other (fig. 3.6). The screen splits into two rows of different size screens: polo players and audience members watching the game from the sidelines. Viewers see multiple perspectives concurrently, being impressed with how the new technology heightens an energetic moment.

Contemporary artists also incorporated split screens into their projects. Photographer Lorna Simpson created *Corridor* (2003), featuring fellow Kenyan artist Wangechi Mutu (fig. 3.7). Mutu plays two roles, a glamorous 1960s suburban housewife and an enslaved servant working in the home of, presumably, a wealthy white family during the nineteenth century. The screen splits vertically in Simpson's film, as opposed to horizontally in Koolhaas' work. *Corridor*'s protagonists move throughout their homes, doing mundane tasks, dressing, talking on the phone, or cleaning. The viewer's eyes move back and forth between the frames, comparing the figures, their circumstances, tasks, and the households themselves. *Corridor*'s action is quieter than *Thomas Crown Affair*, but both demonstrate visual experimentation, simultaneous acts, and juxtaposition.

Lagos/Koolhaas also features Koolhaas' lectures as a bridge between film cuts. The go-slow sequence begins with traders selling goods on the roadway and ends with traders selling goods to train passengers. Koolhaas' lectures break up three-dimensional physical action into two-dimensional flatness. Placed in-between the film's Lagos footage, Koolhaas' lecture depicts him in his "professorial mode," enlightening off-camera audiences about his impressions of street vending and open-air markets. Footage of Koolhaas theorizing and explaining trading merges his film editing and his participant

observer roles. His statements reinforce himself as an authority on contemporary Lagos life. He comments: "What seemed like a completely random and improvised world…actually included a number of elaborate organizational networks,"[257] illustrating his preliminary misconceptions. Those observations began partly because Koolhaas and his team stayed in their cars during their early visits out of fear of the unknown.[258] It was only when they ventured outside and engaged with Lagoisans that Koolhaas and his team realized that citizens selling household items were part of a complex system of informal trading.

However, even with his initial misunderstandings, the fact that he lectured to an audience about Lagos, a city he previously knew nothing about, but one that he has since conducted fieldwork on, presented him as a knowledgeable scholar imparting his wisdom to others. Koolhaas' lectures took place in 2002 at the international art exhibition *Documenta 11* Platform 5 in Lagos where he presented his initial research to academics, architects, and curators from the United States, Europe, and Africa. They were then incorporated back into the film prior to release.[259] Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor was artistic director for *Documenta 11*, which consisted of four international conferences and public debates, culminating in an exhibition focused on "democracy, justice, cultural and religious difference, and new spatial arrangements."[260] Koolhaas participated in Platform 5, *Under Siege: Four African Cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*. The

---

[257] Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos/Koolhaas*.

[258] Rem Koolhaas, "Fragment of a Lecture in Lagos," 175.

[259] Joseph Godlewski, "Alien and Distant: Rem Koolhaas on Film in Lagos, Nigeria," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements* Review 21, no. 11 (Spring 2010): 12.

[260] Okwui Enwezor, Preface to *Under Siege: Four African Cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos,* 10.

title of the conference illustrates Enwezor's pessimistic tone towards African cities at the beginning of the twenty-first century. While Koolhaas finds Lagos a place of innovation within trying times, Enwezor still finds "the contemporary African city… today in crisis."[261] The context of Koolhaas' lectures adds further authority to his footage in *Lagos/Koolhaas*, since he was speaking to Nigerian, non-Nigerian, European and American audiences. Furthermore, *Documenta 11*'s Nigerian organizer had countering perspectives to Koolhaas' European points-of-view, yet still included him.

Koolhaas' voiceover demonstrates sounds' ability to give viewers pertinent information about on screen events, while yet remaining unnoticeable as a cinematic strategy for moving the narrative forward.[262] Sound has been a part of cinema through live music since before it was introduced in the 1930s.[263] Although sound is obviously heard, viewers are used to it as a component of a plot, enhancing the experience with emotional reactions. They may no longer regard it as a conscious tactic keeping viewers invested in a film's narrative. In *Lagos/Koolhaas*, the architect defines go-slows while viewers see one, presenting his "friction zone" theory, where Lagos is "a city not of flow, but… [of] permanent congestion and stoppages."[264] Although most major cities have severe traffic congestion, Koolhaas was interested in Lagosians using freeway lanes and open spaces in highly trafficked areas as spaces for commerce. Their need to find ways to make money created an environment where any and all spaces had possibilities for

---

261 Okwui Enwezor, Introduction to *Under Siege: Four African Cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*, 14.

262 David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill: 1990): 291.

263 Karl Dibbets, "The Introduction of Sound," in *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 211.

264 Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos/Koolhaas*.

opportunities. Koolhaas' statements reflect the architect's perceptions and affect audiences in different ways depending on who the viewers are, their particular relationship to Lagos, itinerant lifestyles, and the film.

Lagos/Koolhaas was an outgrowth of Koolhaas' earlier scholarly publications on international urbanism and architecture and was his first cinematic experimentation on the subject.[265] In 1996, a year after Koolhaas' faculty appointment at Harvard's School of Design, he began working with graduate students in "an ongoing effort… [to examine] the effects of modernization on the urban condition."[266] Koolhaas and a team of scholars went to the Pearl River Delta region in China, Rome, Italy, and Lagos, Nigeria, to "document and understand the mutation of urban culture in order to develop a new conceptual framework and vocabulary for phenomena that can no longer be described within the traditional categories of architecture, landscape, and urban planning."[267] Koolhaas wanted to understand, and even explain, rapid urbanization at the beginning of the twenty-first century. He studied damming on the Pearl River Delta, self-organization and sustainability in Lagos' informal and private structures, and Roman ruins as a precursor to contemporary urban modernization.[268]

Koolhaas published his Project on the City research in *Mutations* (2000) with chapters outlining each city's project and methodology. Koolhaas argued that he and his team were "resisting the notion that Lagos represent[ed] an African city en route to

---

265 Joseph Godlewski, "Alien and Distant: Rem Koolhaas on Film in Lagos, Nigeria," 8. For a short list of some of Koolhaas' publications, see footnote #129.

266 Rem Koolhaas et al., *Mutations*, 19.

267 Ibid, 19.

268 Ibid, 19.

becoming modern...; rather…, Lagos represent[ed] a developed, extreme, paradigmatic case-study of a city at the forefront of a globalizing modernity."[269] *Mutations* included photographs of Lagos' informal communities under highway overpasses, essays on city and neighborhood security, Alaba International Electronics Market, and car parks along green spaces by major highways. The book featured aerial photographs of Lagos, presenting packed public spaces filled with traders, a mosaic of rusted-tin roofs speckled with laundry, and cement buildings surrounded by walls (figs. 3.8 and 3.9).[270] *Mutations* gave a bird's eye view of Lagos while *Lagos/Koolhaas* represented the city on the ground, contrasting how a person might move through the tight conditions visible from above.

Koolhaas never explicitly stated his reasons for creating *Lagos/Koolhaas*.[271] When released in 2002, the film circulated at European and American film festivals.[272] However, one surmises that the architect created the film because he was constantly moving in Lagos, riding in danfos and flying in helicopters, taking aerial and territorial photographs getting both foreground and background perspectives. He wanted another medium to highlight Lagosians in motion.[273]

Koolhaas' project occurred at a time when other cultural practitioners were interested in twenty-first-century global urbanization. In 1997 Richard Lang, then

---

269 Ibid, 653.

270 Ibid, 653-80.

271 Although Koolhaas is the primary name associated with the film, Dutch journalist Bregtje van der Haak was the director. Van der Haak produced and directed the film based on Koolhaas' desire for a documentary model. Interview with Bregtje van der Haak, Skype, April 14, 2015.

272 *Lagos/Koolhaas* was presented at Architects' Series, MoMA, New York (2003); Marseille International Documentary Film Festival (2003); African Studies Association Film Festival, New Orleans (2004), and Wellesley College African Film Festival (2004).

273 Rem Koolhaas, "Fragment of a Lecture in Lagos," 175-77.

Director of Lagos' Goethe-Institut, organized *Many Faces of Lagos*, a group exhibition of Nigerian press photographers and their images of Lagos. Lang's first sentence in the catalogue states: "Compare it with other mega-towns of its size in the world; there is little known about Lagos and there are even fewer photographs available."[274] The exhibition was an opportunity for Nigerian photographic self-representation, giving visual information and a localized point-of-view on Lagos.

Concurrent with Koolhaas' research were two international exhibitions featuring international mega-cities. Spanish curator Pep Subirós organized *Africas: The Artist & The City* (2001) at the Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, while British curator Iwona Blazwick organized *Century City: Art & Culture in the Modern Metropolis* (2001) at the Tate Modern. Subirós presented contemporary African artists' depictions of African cities, such as Lagos, and Western cities with large African populations, such as London. Blazwick's exhibition featured works exploring relationships between global metropolises and modern and contemporary international artists. Both exhibition catalogues discussed the rise of metropolis, modernity, and modernism during the twentieth century, and their transition in the twenty-first century.[275] Subirós' represented Lagos through Akinbode's photographs, while Blazwick represented the city through archival photographs. Koolhaas explored similar themes to Lang's, Subirós', and Blazwick's exhibitions, utilizing film instead of static photography.

---

[274] Richard Lang, "Introduction," in *Many Faces of Lagos* (Lagos: Goethe-Institut, 1997): 1.

[275] Pep Subirós, *Africas: The Artist and the City, A Journey and an Exhibition*, 10-11; Iwona Blazwick, *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis*, 13.

Although Koolhaas forwarded his perceptions of Lagos as new, dazzling, and different in *Lagos/Koolhaas*, his audiences may have had other reactions. Koolhaas' film made European and American audiences aware of lifestyles of which they may not have had any previous knowledge. In large European and American cities, public transportation is common, and although citizens may complain about delayed trains or buses, the public takes them because of convenience and affordability. Riders also know public infrastructural funding keeps trains and buses maintained. In Lagos, "public transportation" users are at the mercy of a system that they have no control over because danfos are privately owned. Danfos are not always maintained, are uncomfortable, and conductors will not leave their station until the bus is full. Moreover, as presented in Akinbiyi's and Nkanga's photographs, the buses are associated with death.

Lagosians do not have similar public transportation systems as citizens in Western cities have. Inhabitants often walk long distances or take an okada to the station, spending additional money for multiple forms of travel or extra time journeying to a particular location. Both situations are further exacerbated by weather conditions, especially during the rainy season when flooding occurs throughout much of Lagos.[276] When going to work (peak travel times are 7:30-10:30 am and 3:30-6:30 pm), traffic times can take two hours each way, adding further stress on professional and non-professional workers.[277]

---

[276] Lagos' rainy season is from April to October. Unfortunately lack of proper sewage drains and wetland destruction has increased flooding issues in the city. This can cause additional issues traveling on unpaved roads. B. Badejo, and T.I. Salau, "Transportation and the Environment: The Lagos Example," *Transportation* (May 2010): 9.

[277] Samson Babatunde Osoba, "Appraisal of Parking Problems and Traffic Management Measures in Central Business District in Lagos, Nigeria," *Journal of Sustainable Development* 5, no. 8 (August 2012): 102.

Recognizing that individuals have varying forms of transportation suggests differing forms of power dynamics at work. Working-class locals often live further away from their place of employment and have to contend daily with weather conditions and public transportation. However, those individuals with economic means can have a driver take them to work outside of major traffic times, often live closer to their place of employment, thus making commuting easier, or wait at a bar until most traffic is over to return home, and have staff take care of household chores.

Koolhaas is also a part of the unequal power play as a privileged artist able to travel to Lagos and represent the populace and city from the perspective of his choosing. His point-of-view, which features both on-the-ground shots, is part of a legacy of colonial and ethnographic imagery, which creates a distance between artist and subject. As discussed in the introduction his work is a twenty-first century rendition of late nineteenth and early twentieth century ethnographic, colonial photography. The French and British colonial governments used photographic imagery of local populations throughout their territories within western Africa to create, and reinforce through "evidence," stereotypes in order to maintain power.[278] Women and young girls were predominately captured nude, while men were "the noble savage," often suggesting brute strength, immorality of the local population and their "close association" with nature. Famous *LIFE* magazine photojournalist Eliot Elisofon participated in this long-standing trope through his 1961 photo-essay "A Writer's Land of Primitive, Eloquent beauty: Stories World of Africa." In addition to his images of various communities throughout

[278] Okechukwu Nwafor, "Photography: Daguerreotype and the African Experience," *Mgbakoigba: Journal of African Studies* 4 (2015): 2.

the continent Elisofon captured the various as lush wilderness devoid of cities or featuring picturesque villages surrounded by repeating depictions of mountains, confluences of rivers, waterfalls, open savannahs and dense jungles. Most of these images did not specify the location or name the individuals. These images ingrained the notions of the African continent as one homogeneous space of nature outside of time with small numbers of people living in centuries past.[279] The essay did not reflect the cosmopolitan urbanism of Lagos and Ibadan in the newly independent Nigeria, or Accra in Ghana.

While Elisofon's photographic strategies included close cropping out any foreigners or examples of urbanism, much of Koolhaas's imagery was taken on a ride in the former president's helicopter. He and his team photographed and videoed Lagos from above, panning the rusted-tin roofs of informal communities, the highways packed with traffic, the skyscrapers on Victoria Island and the three main bridges that connected the islands to the mainland. Watching Lagos life from above viewers see how expansive the city is given that for several minutes there is little-to-no break of tightly packed buildings with small alleyways in between. The city never seems to end, highlighting the congestion and density.

Koolhaas' aerial imagery literally creates a distanced perspective between himself and his subject as well as continues the colonial strategy of aerial photography to map local populations in order maintain control. French ethnographer Marcel Griaule (1898-1956), who led an expedition within modern-day Mali, wrote about the importance of

[279] Raoul Granqvist, "Photojournalism's White Mythologies: Eliot Elisofon and *LIFE* in Africa, 1959-61," *Research in African Literatures* 43, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 84-100; Okechukwu Nwafor, "Photography: Daguerreotype and the African Experience," 2-3.

aerial imagery to management the West African colonies. "Obviously the established documents constitute labor instruments of the first order for the colonial administration: to govern a people is first of all to know them…the studies of ethnology will help the colonial government in the exercise of a difficult and multi-faceted task."[280]According to Griaule the foreign government could use the images to "understand" the peoples they govern, while also preserving oversight.

Aerial photography has a history dating back to late eighteenth century Europe, though it became more widely used for military surveillance during WWI, and for urban planning post WWII.[281] Aerial imagery gave urban planners both a real and surreal perspective on their environment. Until that moment, individuals had to imagine what the world looked like from above. Observers felt they could see a more objective point-of-view, as they were not relegated to only viewing a certain of a city on the ground, but its entirety. Aerial imagery allowed observers to stand outside of the urban environment, establishing the landscape as an aesthetic object, which was under the control of the observers. Essentially by having the ability to survey the landscape, planners now had a proprietorial eye, as they could understand how to expand and/or modify urban space. In addition, planners could also see how compact most spaces were, especially by the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The humans living in these crowded buildings

---

[280] Anthony Vidler, "Photojournalism: Planning the City from Above and from Below," in *The City Companion*, eds. G. Bridge and S. Watson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002): 40.

[281] Mark Dorrain, "The aerial view: notes for a cultural history," *Srates* 13 (2007): 10; Anthony Vidler, "Photojournalism: Planning the City from Above and from Below," 35.

became secondary considerations to the overall look and function of cities as planners were no longer thinking from the ground level.[282]

The theoretical tensions between aerial and terrestrial viewpoints of urban space continue into the twentieth century through French philosopher Michel de Certeau's famous essay *Walking in the City*. de Certeau's discussion features New York's spatial formations as opposed to Lagos. He compared being on the 110th floor of the World Trade Center to viewing a "panorama-city." New York's World Trade Center became a theoretical simulacrum; looking down on citizens was an omnipotent point of view. However, being "down below," on the ground, allowed for a more experiential point of view of the city.[283] de Certeau broadened his argument, stating that city maps, sidewalks and routes, supposedly objective strategies to spatialize cities, enacted and continued public control over individuals. Organizing "official ways" people moved through cities created state power over public and private space. de Certeau argued that individuals subverted control by walking. Pedestrians could take pre-existing roads or paths, or create their own, thus transgressing "official" forms of navigation.[284]

de Certerau provides a way of understanding why Koolhaas shot footage of the city from a helicopter and used ground-level footage enamoring viewers with Lagosian contingent workers. From the air, Koolhaas can establish his positionality as a privileged scholar of urban design. In panning the city viewers also see it as an aesthetic concept. With no imagery of inhabitants, just buildings tightly packed together, open air-markets,

---

282 Mark Dorrain, "The aerial view: notes for a cultural history," 5.

283 Michel de Certeau, "Walking in the City," in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984): 92-93.

284 Ibid, 98-99.

etc. Lagos becomes a spectacle of urban, unplanned sprawl. Furthermore, aerial images flatten the city, heightening the geometric quality of the architectural and landscape, reducing a highly dynamic and complex space into almost pure abstraction.[285] By representing Lagos in this manner Koolhaas continues the historical ethnographic and urban design depictions of European observation and ownership.

Conversely, his on-the-ground images feature Lagosians as citizens with "rights to the street," yet the artist is not a part of this daily experience. From the comfort of an air-conditioned van he can take images of individuals who, just like New York' pedestrians, subvert planned control through walking unconventially. While New Yorkers cut through buildings or walk across parks rather than only take sidewalks, Lagosians walk along freeways and major thoroughfares, as well as using them for commerce, through they were originally designed for motorized vehicle travel. Koolhaas features these spaces and how citizens on the ground use them to highlight how citizens challenge these spaces as purely designed for physical movement. Yet, one must realize Koolhaas is still participating in a long tradition of colonial aesthetic and ideological tactics, disrupting any misconception that the artist is educating the Western world on Lagosians' ways of life.

Appropriating space in Lagos for purposes beyond its original function resulted from informal urban planning and lack of public infrastructure. Koolhaas saw these circumstances as a radical act because it offers "a different and more efficient logic than

---

[285] Benjamin Fraser, "The Ills of Aerial Photography: Latin America from Above," *Chasqui: revista de literature latinoamericana* 39, no. 2 (November 2010): 70.

that of the redundant and inefficient highway construction."[286] In highlighting how Lagosians modify space, Koolhaas draws viewer's attention to working-class communities' subversion of state power. If there are no formal jobs available, citizens will develop their own ways of survival, including taking over public space. However, one must note that Koolhaas and de Certeau's analyses of New York's and Lagos' streets were from highly privileged positions. As white males traveling to other countries, they are both able to view seemingly unusual lifestyles from a perspective of distance. Koolhaas was able to theorize about Lagos and the city's inhabitants because he did not live in a place of extreme socioeconomic disparity, nor did he have to trade along streets to survive.

Although Koolhaas does not directly address racial difference within *Lagos/Koolhaas*, the situation is obviously apparent. The film features footage of Koolhaas, a white male, within Lagos, an African city, with a majority of black inhabitants. There are continual depictions of Lagosians moving through Lagos, representing it as a black urban space. Koolhaas' presence in Lagos, on film, shows his physical difference. In addition, by showing Lagos as a spectacle of informal systems through representations of human ingenuity in extreme poverty, he suggests that black spaces are in general lacking in formality. While Koolhaas may find his representation of Lagos as the future for current cities, his association of black bodies with informality, or casualness, does no justice to Lagos. Rather, he creates an unintended consequence of continuing a depiction of African cities as needing Western support to make formal

[286] Rem Koolhaas et al., *Mutations*, 674-85.

systems because of ongoing deficiencies in public infrastructures. Based on Koolhaas' *Mutations* essay on Lagos, where he sees the city's full radical possibilities ("a proposal of new ways to examine the modern city")[287] he unintentionally rearticulates colonialist notions of African spaces as less than European ones.

Despite Koolhaas' unintended participation in neocolonialist depictions of Lagos, he does underline Lagosian resourcefulness in manipulating public space. Non-Nigerian viewers with knowledge of contemporary political upheavals may also view Lagosian street traders as subverting political authority in a way similar to Koolhaas' view. Governmental officials had vested interests in keeping roads for transportation and convenience, and for maintaining control. Regulating behavior in public spaces upheld public power.[288] However, Senegalese scholar Mamadou Diouf describes the presence of postcolonial youth cultures in West African cities as expressions of resistance and discontent towards state power. "The body [in streets] is a presence that serves as both *weapon* and *text*."[289] Young people excluded from public arenas of power find other areas where they are allowed entry and can present themselves on the global stage. Diouf states students use streets, suburbs, forests, frontier areas, and even areas controlled by drug dealers as territories they can control "for the free play of their imagination."[290] In taking over public spaces or creating their own, Senegalese and Nigerian youth resist established forms of power, producing their own.

---

[287] Ibid, 652-53.

[288] Scholar Tim Cresswell writes that spaces are surrogates for power since individuals in dominating groups use space as a way of controlling other individuals or populations. Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 16.

[289] Mamadou Diouf, "Engaging Postcolonial Cultures: African Youth and Public Space," *African Studies Review* 46, no. 2 (September 2003): 10.

[290] Ibid, 5-6.

According to Diouf's argument, Lagosian traders on roadways disrupt the notion that "the place of an act is an active participant in our understanding of what is good, just, and appropriate."[291] While Lagos state officials try to ban street trading and to police "appropriate" public behavior, vendors modify their tactics, finding other locations to sell or bribe officials. Yet, trader's bodies on roadways signal resistance against governmental control over normalizing certain behaviors, all in an effort to ensure survival. As men, women and children continue selling publicly, roads become spaces of multiplicity. Therefore, while Lagos' roads are primarily for travel, traders have practiced consumerism in public long enough for those spaces to become mobile markets as well. Koolhaas' repeated depictions of road vendors draw Western viewers' attention to his perceptions of dissimilarity in Lagos through movement in public space.

Though Koolhaas' representation of Lagos is primary to the film's narrative, his perspective is not the only one. There are numerous interviews with Lagosians of various classes. Viewers hear from Funmi Iyanda, host of the Lagos talk show *New Dawn*, who speaks from a privileged Lagosian position as she shops for Prada shoes and discusses the high cost of school fees and her household staff. "You have to live here to feel it, to know it. You have to react to every situation and every circumstance because everyday there's a new challenge that is thrown at you and you have to be able to handle it."[292] Viewers also hear from a young migrant boy who sells bags of Pure Water to citizens along the street. Another interviewee is a danfo driver.[293] Listening to such commentary by

---

[291] Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, 16.
[292] Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos/Koolhaas*.
[293] Ibid.

Lagosians as Koolhaas rides through Lagos observing it gives viewers another, less aestheticized perspective on the city.

Lagosians watching the go-slow scene may not find their daily existence as different or as exciting as Koolhaas because they must regularly endure hours in traffic or compete to seek out a living, but they will recognize the socioeconomic significance of Koolhaas' depiction of several types of mobility. Transport in Lagos is predominately road-based. Danfos and okadas dominate public transportation due to their cheaper fares. Trains are one of the last forms of transportation; the railroad system is damaged and antiquated.[294] Walking is free, but not always the easiest or safest form of movement with Lagos, which lacks sidewalks in many areas. Drivers are highly aggressive, more concerned with overtaking other cars than watching for pedestrians.[295] Owning a car is cost prohibitive generally, but still a status symbol as a luxury item.[296] Therefore, the type of vehicle a person uses signals their economic status and social mobility.

Lagosians walking or using public transportation are usually less wealthy than those in private cars since the latter signals a person's upper class lifestyle. Cars are imported into Nigeria, increasing their cost; in addition, maintenance and fuel for daily use are expensive. Traders also need car owners as customers, buying wares during their commute. Yet this does not equate to one-sided power relationships. Traders roaming road lanes during go slows have power over wealthy citizens as they can move during traffic hours. Traders work on different time schedules than office commuters. They

---

294 S.I. Oni and K.R. Okanlawon, "An Assessment of the Usage of the Lagos Mass Transit Trains," *International Journal of Railway* 5, no. 1 (March 2012): 31-32.

295 For a more detailed discussion on the dangers of driving in Lagos, see Chapters 1 and 2.

296 O.B. Olufemi and M.S. Oluseyi, "The Urban Poor and Mobility Stress in Nigerian Cities," 1-3.

move around the city as best fits them, when commuters are home, freeing up the roadways, making travel quicker. During the commute, traders weave through lanes selling items, extending travel times, thus creating a reverse power dynamic over those driving home. While Koolhaas finds Lagosian go-slows new and radical, to locals they are simply a form of employment for a large percentage of the population.

Audiences of African descent watching *Lagos/Koolhaas* may see Lagosian contingent lifestyles as different from their own, but not a way of life to be emulated due an understanding of racial and social inequality. The aforementioned scholar Stuart Hall understands Europeans' sense of novelty, like Koolhaas', toward Lagosian "otherness." Hall writes that "difference matters because it is essential to meaning; without it, meaning could not exist."[297] In presenting what makes Lagos life distinct from Amsterdam or Rotterdam, Koolhaas creates a binary between these locations. Koolhaas is so fascinated by experiences so dissimilar to his own that he may not take into account the particularities of how those circumstances came to be, and he may not see that most Lagosians probably prefer living a life of ease and convenience. He does not recognize his own privilege.

Lagosian street traders have less control over public space than governmental officials and wealthy individuals. State officials have controlled markets and state and federal highways since the 1970s, indiscriminately enforcing street trading bans, destroying illegal markets, arresting vendors, and confiscating goods, all to levy taxes against traders for their release. Officials now require vendors to register themselves and

[297] Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," 234.

create stalls in predetermined places organized for that specific use. Unfortunately, most individuals are too cash poor to afford registration fees and stall rentals.[298] Roads are seemingly free spaces where vendors can sell to an established customer base. However, itinerant traders are subject to official's whims, making them extremely vulnerable.

Wealthier individuals and high-level government officials felt that alleviating roadways of "illegal" markets and vendors would prevent "threats" from peddlers. Lagos Town Council members perceived migrant traders as participating in immoral, unhealthy behavior, robing commuters and inducing child labor since traders often start working as children. They felt that a lack of street traders would also reduce traffic times for commuters.[299] Presumptions about Lagos traders came from the city's elite, state and corporate individuals with resources, able to support their families. Most traders began working as children for economic reasons, not desire.

Koolhaas' focus on Lagosian go-slows is similar to a privileged position. He was able to film where and how he wanted and presented his perspective through his footage and editing. He did not have to worry about walking in certain places and being harassed or arrested since he had drivers.[300] Although non-African viewers may agree with Koolhaas that Lagosians have new, alternative jobs and lifestyles, it does not mean that locals wish to live in that manner. Moreover, Lagosian audiences may completely disagree with Koolhaas' representation of Lagos. Reception of the film plays a key role.

---

298 Laurent Fourchard, "Lagos, Koolhaas and Partisan Politics in Nigeria," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 1 (2010): 48-49.
299 Ibid, 49.
300 Matthew Gandy, "Learning from Lagos," 40.

The Spectacle of Informality

Koolhaas' cinematic motifs on street trading, private recycling plants, and markets throughout *Lagos/Koolhaas* emphasize the architect's attraction towards Lagos' "informal economy." The term has related definitions where participants are excluded from "formal public economic systems," using little capital to produce small quantities of goods, with a small staff of no more than ten people, and a structure of management where people do multiple positions.[301] British anthropologist Kevin Hart conducted a study of Ghanaian migrants in Accra in 1966, developing the term. Hart distinguished between formal and informal incomes through "the degree of rationalization of working conditions."[302] He argued that informal economies were based on whether or not labor was recruited for permanent, regularized amounts of time for fixed rewards.[303] Employed workers received consistent wages from the state, but they were low; and combined with high prices for goods and services, they incited individuals to find additional employment. Secondary and even tertiary occupations could be night guards, farmers, traders, musicians, launders, mechanics, pickpockets, and robbers. They were essentially any non-

---

301 Scholar Comfort Chukuezi gives two different general definitions for "informal economy." "A small enterprise... one in which the operation and administrative management lie in the hands of one or two people who are responsible for making the major decisions of the enterprise," and "those enterprises that have relatively little capital investment, that produce in small quantities and as a result control (individually) a small share of the market, that employs less than ten people, and in which management, marketing and entrepreneurial functions are vested in the proprietor... The organization of production units is usually along traditional lines with the proprietor at the centre of operations." Comfort Chukuezi, "Urban Informal Sector and Unemployment in Third World Cities: The Situation in Nigeria," *Asian Social Science* 6, no. 8 (August 2010): 132-33.

302 Kevin Hart, "Bureaucratic Form and the Informal Economy," in *Linking the Formal and Informal Economy: Concepts and Policies*, eds., Basudeb Guha-Khasnobis, Ravi Kanbur, and Elinor Ostrom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 26.

303 Kevin Hart, "Informal Urban Income Opportunities in Ghana," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 11, no. 1 (March 1973): 68.

regularized position, not monitored through state bureaucracy, allowing workers to garner additional income with relative ease.[304]

Hart also pointed out that, despite the impermanency of secondary or self-employed positions, high level of professionalism was pervasive since "informal workers" interacted frequently with "formal workers." Governments within countries, like Nigeria or Ghana, were aware of citizens who were employed in positions in which there was little-to-no political oversight; however, that did not mean that politicians were not involved. The Lagos State government challenged street traders working on major roads with arrests, although traders were released when police received bribes.[305] Although city and state government paid police salaries (formal economy), those same individuals received "additional wages" through tips (informal economy).

Since Hart's research a generation prior to Koolhaas' film, informal economic opportunities are continuously linked to Lagos and other cities in Africa. According to scholar Priscilla Archibald, informal sectors grow at double the rate of formal sectors worldwide.[306] Sociologist AbdouMaliq Simone has written extensively on local economy variations in African and Southeast Asian cities.[307] He noted that since 1990 informal businesses that lack major front-end costs and rigid organizational structures provide

---

304 Kevin Hart, "Bureaucratic Form and the Informal Economy," 24-26.

305 Adebayo Lawal, "Markets and Street Trading in Lagos," 250-51.

306 Priscilla Archibald, "Urban Transculturations," *Social Text* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 91.

307 Simone's publications include *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities* (2004), *Urban Africa: Changing Contours of Survival in the City* (2005), and *City Life from Jakarta to Dakar: Movements at the Crossroads* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

75% of basic necessities for residents in cities, like Dakar, employing over half the workforce.[308]

Although informal jobs are not particular to Lagos, or Africa, since they are common throughout Asia, Latin America, and even Europe,[309] Koolhaas' lack of familiarity causes his fixation on these networks in *Lagos/Koolhaas*. Again playing multiple roles, Koolhaas presents several motifs: the aforementioned street traders and outdoor markets, a recycling plant, and Pentecostal church. As a participant observer, the architect depicts instances where an area of land is transformed for multiple functions, often interviewing the workers.

One sequence similar to the go-slow presents men walking along a highway carrying large barrel drums on their heads, most likely, import and export containers (fig. 3.10). Highways, traditionally for motorized travel, are now for other types of movement, challenging predominate forms of behavior. The barrel porters work for a private recycling plant in what would normally be an empty lot or green space between a cloverleaf overpass. Large drums are stacked up in a pyramidal design, according to color throughout the lot, underneath cars driving into Lagos Island (fig. 4.11). Koolhaas' interviews plant workers, hearing how the company is run to pay for the land where they work and live. Viewers watch a worker shadowbox in the same area where other men fix barrels.

---

308 AbdouMaliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, 25; Priscilla Archibald, "Urban Transculturations," 91.

309 Hart references studies on working classes, finding informal forms of employment conducted in the United States, England and Central America, starting in the nineteenth century. Kevin Hart, "Informal Urban Income Opportunities in Ghana," 67-68.

Koolhaas then shifts to his film editor role, juxtaposing footage from an electronics market with images of Michael Jackson performing in concert to a live audience, overlaid with vocals from the *Carmine Burana* overture, producing an energetic, aural spectacle about commerce. The *Lagos/Koolhaas* sequences on informal economies affirm Koolhaas' fascination with Lagosian ingenuity and alternative socioeconomic networks. The architect then manipulates footage, combining it with music and quick cuts, generating an overwhelmingly intense scene for viewers.

Koolhaas comments upon the sophisticated nature of trading tactics in his lecture on the subject, discussing how men and women move through traffic lanes or traffic, waylaying pedestrians or crowding into train stations. He does not remark on vendor's performativity, subtler strategies, which are just as complicated, but not as easily discernable. Koolhaas may not discuss human performance simply because he was unaware of them, especially since the gestures are culturally specific to Yoruba people. During the go-slow scene, vendors are shown selling items. As the van moves forward, the camera pans men with items in their hands, vying for potential customers, and running after vehicles, persuading drivers or passengers to buy (fig. 4.12). The men gesture to customers with their right hand, while holding their items in their left hand. Among the Yoruba, active or "positive" tasks, such as eating, drinking, giving and receiving, are executed with the right hand. The left hand is for "passive" tasks, keeping information, or doing dirty tasks, i.e. taking care of bodily functions.[310]

[310] Olanike Ola Orie, "Pointing the Yoruba Way," *Gesture* 9, no. 2 (2009): 238.

The seller's hands in *Lagos/Koolhaas* are also open, not pointing or in a fist. Open hands are polite gestures towards older people or higher status individuals.[311] Therefore, vendors using open, right-handed gestures back-and-forth with customers are socially acceptable as signs of respect. When making sales, physical signals are just as important as vocal ones; thus, traders must use interpersonal charm as they are selling themselves as much as their merchandise.[312] They must market the items, saying how well it works, how good the food is, or how well an item looks, all in a respectful and charismatic manner. A Yoruba viewer might recognize the gestures, while those unfamiliar with Lagos and its selling tactics would not.

Using words like "oga," an Igbo word for "master," is now a Lagosian colloquial term for an elder person or boss, signifying respect and humility.[313] It is a performance of power dynamics so when a vendor yells "Master don do dat" during the film, he or she is temporally acceding control to his potential customer finalizing a sale. Yet the seller is also in control since he or she is giving power to someone else in order to generate an economic exchange. The vendor's phrase punctuates the scene, especially for American and African diasporic viewers who may question the reasoning behind using such as charged moniker in light of the American history of African-American enslavement. Non-Nigerian viewers may not recognize social complexity within street trading; instead, they may see bodily gestures as another form of cultural dissimilarity for which Koolhaas

311 Ibid, 246.

312 Beatrice Adenike Oloko, "Children's Street Work in Urban Nigeria as Adaptation and Maladaptation to Changing Socioeconomic Circumstances," *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 16, no. 3 (1993): 476.

313 Innocent Chiluwa, "Nigerian English in Informal Email Messages," *English World-Wide* 31, no. 1 (2010): 53.

wants to call attention. For those familiar with the practice, they will recognize these subtle tactics.

In Koolhaas' related Alaba Market sequence, the architect exaggerates the simple task of offloading electronics equipment with film-editing techniques producing a multi-sensory spectacle on a Lagosian marketplace (figs. 3.13 and 3.14). The sequence begins with the aforementioned television host Iyanda interviewing Koolhaas, who comments about the market's unique existence.

> What fascinates us [Koolhaaas and his team] is how in a situation, which is much less organized than the typical city in the West, there are now incredible self-organizing entities. Like, for instance, one of the one's that impresses me most is Alaba Market. Where for the sheer intelligence of the self-organization there is a very powerful entity, which is now the largest importer of electronics in West Africa.[314]

The scene then cuts to a ground-level view of a large male crowd walking away from the camera, one carrying two large box televisions. Two-story stalls line the frame edges, and a truck with an attached shipping container moves toward the camera, opposite the crowd. The scene continues with an accelerating set of film cuts, juxtaposing men unloading items from a shipping container – VCRs, televisions, remotes – with footage of Michael Jackson gyrating, kicking out his leg, tearing his shirt apart, and concert audience members crying and shouting as they watch the performer.[315] The crescendo *O Fortuna* from *Carmina Burana*, composed by Carl Orff (1935-36), plays against the

---

314 Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos/Koolhaas*.

315 The footage is from an unknown Michael Jackson concert during his 1992 *Dangerous* tour. Joseph Godlewski, "Alien and Distant: Rem Koolhaas on Film in Lagos, Nigeria," 11.

visual action.[316] The combination of music, rapid-fire cuts, bodies in motion, and electronics makes the sequence more like a music video than a documentary.

Alaba is a privately funded, self-organized international electronics market in Ojo, a neighborhood on Lagos' mainland outskirts. It has an elected Chairman, Executive Council, and two security institutions.[317] Alaba is different from street trading or a recycling plant because no other functions occur there. The market is for commerce only, although it urbanized a previously rural area of Lagos. The area grew in size, accommodating over 2,800 individual merchants without concerns about pre-existing structures or communities. At the time of Koolhaas' research, Alaba was the largest revenue generator for Ojo, funding schools, libraries, fire stations, jails, courthouses, electric substations, and telecommunications. Merchants and workers built homes, producing a neighborhood where one previously had not existed.[318]

Koolhaas' attraction to Alaba was its ability to function, grow and thrive without government sponsorship, although presumably the market owners will pay taxes to Lagos State government until the cost of the land is paid off.[319] The merchants built the town's public infrastructures and maintain them by paying workers. Alaba Market was an extreme example of informal and formal sectors working together, a private corporatized

316 Ibid, 11.

317 Rem Koolhaas, et.al, *Mutations*, 702-08.

318 Ibid, 702-707.

319 There is no research on the specific landownership agreement between the market owners and the state government. However, according to the Land Use Act of 1978, the state governor owns land in urban spaces, while local governments own rural land. The market owners may have been able to pay for the land out right rather than in regular monthly or annual taxes. (or payments?) Ademola Braimoh, and Takashi Onishi, "Spatial Determinants or Urban Land Use Change in Lagos, Nigeria," *Land Use Policy* 24 (2007): 506.

company with international ties and regulated taxes, where individual vendors were responsible for sales and employee payments.

Koolhaas' represents Lagos' Alaba market as a spectacle of dense commerce through editing rather than actual footage. He uses high-speed editing typically associated with Hollywood action films, where viewers eye move rapidly, watching explosions or car chases, stressing sensation over substance and reflection. Film scholar Lara Thompson writes that different cinematic speeds create different emotional responses.

> [W]ith fast images, the eye is denied contemplation, so that the spectator must assume an all-encompassing, unblinking, intense and excited gaze, during which the mind must struggle to keep up, must fight to understand; with slow images the eye is free, the gaze is calm and the mind can relax and take its time to understand more specific less frenetic emotions.[320]

Thompson's statement about how humans can and cannot digest images depending upon speed suggests that Koolhaas wanted viewers to initially reflect on images in slower speeds, seeing how tightly packed the market was, yet seeing as well how the market was still able to accommodate large trucks bringing in second-hand electronics for resale. Yet as image speed increases, viewer's responses turn more emotional as the mundane act of human beings unloading equipment repeatedly is a part of a much larger, abstract structure. Most workers may never travel to Singapore or Tokyo to barter for deals, but those in Lagos are still involved in a global, rapid-speed trade.

A viewer's eye cannot keep up with all of the action in the Alaba market scene; timing between shots is too quick. Images of vendors offloading items and Michael Jackson performing increases in speed, accelerating so quickly that images become a blur

---

[320] Lara Thompson, "In Praise of Speed: The Value of Velocity in Contemporary Cinema," *Dandelion* 2, no.1, (2011): 3.

of bodies, movement, and objects of technology. The accompanying choral and orchestral music is purely aural, starting quietly, getting progressive louder as cuts increase in speed. The visual and auditory elements combine together, producing an overwhelming feeling of intensity. Koolhaas suggests that he finds Nigerian marketplaces entertaining in their uniqueness, enhancing his beliefs through editing.

The Alaba market scene is not spectacular in its actual footage. The scene depicts a large crowd outlining the open shipping container, but vendors are not fighting each other or yelling for items; rather, they stand patiently waiting for their particular objects to be offloaded. Viewers see several examples of men carrying multiple box televisions on their shoulder or up to six VCR's stacked on top of their heads. Koolhaas may be interested in this physical form of portability as another alternate form of movement unique to non-European countries. Men and women within Nigeria, other parts of the African continent, and throughout the world, regularly carry heavy loads upon their heads, while walking both long and short distances.[321] However, this porting style is not common in Western Europe or the United States, enabling Koolhaas to present another practice associated with informality in Nigeria.

As the scene progresses in speed, viewers hear male and female voices singing in Latin, with baritone drums and horns in the background. *Carmina Burana* is a popular choral and orchestral piece of music based on Medieval poetry. The text in *O Fortuna's*

---

[321] G.J. Bastien, P.A. Williams, B. Schepens, N.C. Heglund, "Effect of Load and Speed on the Energetic Cost of Human Walking, " *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, 94, no. 1 (May 2005): 76-83; R. Lloyd, B. Parr, S. Davies, T. Partridge, C. Cooke, "A Comparison of the Physiological Consequences of Head-Loading for African and European Women," *European Journal of Applied Physiology* 104, no. 4 (July 2010): 607-16; R. Lloyd, B. Parr, S. Davies, T. Partridge, C. Cooke, "Subjective Perceptions on Load Carriage on the Head and Back in Xhosa Women, " *Applied Ergonomics* 41, no. 4 (July 2010): 522-29.

chorus, the beginning and ending of an hour-long song, is a warning of the fickleness of Fate, understood as a omnipotent figure, not just an abstract understanding of destiny.[322] Beyond *Lagos/Koolhaas*, the music was a part of numerous television episodes and fictional film soundtracks: *King of Queens* (Season 5, Episode 21), *Last of the Mohicans* (1992), and *Jackass: The Movie* (2002). It is primarily in scenes of violence, horror, or anticipation, and studies show audiences react fearfully and angrily when hearing it.[323] *O Fortuna* enhances feelings of anticipation and excitement for viewers. As Koolhaas was awed with how Alaba market functioned, the architect uses the music to exaggerate similar responses in viewers who have probably never been to and may never go to Lagos. *Carmina Burana* is a famous piece of music, although it is unclear whether popular culture knows its wider history. It also seems unlikely that viewers know Medieval Latin; thus, it is doubtful that Koolhaas is connecting Lagos markets with Fate's fickleness. The music heightens the rapidly speeding visuals, causing the eye to lose focus on what is front of it. The market becomes a dazzling display of sound and pictorial images.

Koolhaas' Michael Jackson inclusion revolves around performance and accessibility. Vendor's bodies moving objects through the market place is similar to a dance. Some men wear no shirts, displaying their physique to the camera. Jackson also flaunts his toned shape to his audience. Both actions demonstrate black males

---

322 Eric Frisen, "Carmina Burana: The Big Mac of Classical Music?" *Queen's Quarterly* 188, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 283.

323 Hyun Ju Chong, Eunju Jeong, and Soo Ji Kim, "Listener's Perception of Intended Emotions in Music," *International Journal of Contents* 9, no. 4 (December 2013): 81; Theodore Albrecht, "From Super Bowl to Salty Snacks: Opportunities for Advocacy Presented by the Use of 'Classical' Music," *Choral Journal* 51, no. 8 (2011): 48.

performing, although Lagos' vendors may be doing it unconsciously while Jackson's movement is purposeful. Koolhaas presents both situations as visually dynamic. In bringing the two moments together via editing, Koolhaas increases their individual multi-sensory forcefulness, making black male bodies sites of entertainment for Western viewers. Here is an explicit example of where the "spectacle of the Other" is present through racial difference. Michael Jackson is an entertainer, who puts his body on display, demonstrating elaborate choreography and musical combinations. Alaba market workers are doing a job, and Koolhaas puts their actions on display by juxtaposing them with Jackson, suggesting a difference between him, the architect, and Jackson and the workers in Lagos. One could also say the editing exoticizes manual labor.

In addition, Jackson is a recognizable African-American superstar, one many Lagosian vendors may aspire to become. Juxtaposing him with unnamed traders references Koolhaas' shift in perception about access in Nigeria. The architect previously stated his belief that Lagos was disconnected globally. However, the Chairman of Alaba Market, interviewed later in the film, points out the international scope of the market, with scouts venturing to Spain, Italy, Dubai, Japan and Singapore, contradicting Koolhaas' comment. Jackson's presence in the scene also highlights Koolhaas' ill-informed statement. Lagosians not only know who Michael Jackson is, but wealthier individuals may even have the ability to travel to Europe, Asia or the United States to see him in concert. Hall's theory of representation is apropos here. While Koolhaas is focused on illustrating distinctions between Lagos and cities in the West for his audiences, Jackson's presence as a global figure disrupts the idea. His representation in

the scene connects Lagos with other major cities because Jackson was an icon around the world when the film was being made.

In Koolhaas' represention of Alaba market or street trading as spectacles, he emphasizes "informal" economies and "unplanned" communities as visually and intellectually stimulating. In another statement during his Iyanda interview, Koolhaas remarks that Alaba is an autonomous initiative, which he believed did not exist in any other situation of which he was aware.[324] Koolhaas' urban planning projects in The Netherlands were based on that nation's highly structured spatial planning system, which has been in existence since the 1950s.[325] Dutch spatial planning has been the domain of urban planners for much of the twentieth century, through a system of public consensus and private consultation. Whereas, in Lagos, development occurs through public and private investments, including informal communities building on available land, Dutch urban planning is completely formal.[326] The differences in planning may have led to Koolhaas' fascination with spatial organization in Lagos.

During the mid-1990s, Koolhaas became skeptical of urban planning, believing that "in spite of its early promise, its frequent bravery, urbanism has been unable to invent and implement at the scale demanded by its apocalyptical demographics."[327] He cited Lagos' population growth as an example of urban planning's failure and stated that

---

[324] Ibid.

[325] Arnold van der Valk, "The Dutch Planning Experience," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 58 (2002): 202.

[326] Ibid, 206.

[327] Rem Koolhaas, "Whatever Happened to Urbanism?" 28.

"urbanism will have to imagine a new newness."[328] In venturing to Lagos, Koolhaas seemed to find the newness he was looking for in jam-packed highways filled with street traders and open-air markets. His enthrallment in seeing types of existence so different from his own inspired *Lagos/Koolhaas*. Koolhaas' repeated practice of editing sights that Lagosians might not feel as new or ingenious into scenes of dazzlement for European and American viewers sparked a major interest in Lagos as a case study in postmodernity.

Conclusion

Lagos/Koolhaas has become an iconic work on Lagos, highlighting Lagosians' varying forms of mobility amid the cityscape's constantly changing urban typography and informal economy. Its aforementioned criticism has made the film, and larger related Harvard Project on the City research, a case study for scholarly discourse on international representations of Lagos at the beginning of the twenty-first century.[329] This chapter tried to place *Lagos/Koolhaas* in relation to Nigerian artists from Lagos who had different perspectives on the city from Koolhaas.

Koolhaas' representations of Lagos in *Lagos/Koolhaas* were based on his experiences as a privileged European architect and scholar visiting and observing an

---

328 Ibid, 28-29.

329 Akin Adesokan, "Anticipating Nollywood: Lagos circa 1996," *Social Dynamics* 37, no. 1 (March 2011): 106; Jim Bizzocchi, "The Fragmented Frame: The Poetics of the Split-Screen," (citation or page #s); Lauren Fourchard, "Les Rues de Lagos: Espaces Disputés/Spaces Partagés," *Flux* 4, no. 66-67 (2006): 62-3; Lauren Fourchard, "Lagos Koolhaas and Partisan Politics in Nigeria," 40-56; Matthew Gandy, "Learning from Lagos," 37-41; Joseph Godlewski, "Alien and Distant: Rem Koolhaas on Film in Lagos, Nigeria," 7-19; Jonathan Haynes, "Nollywood in Lagos, Lagos in Nollywood Films," *Africa Today* 54, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 132; Tim Hecker, "The Slum Pastoral: Helicopter Visuality and Koolhaas's Lagos," 256-69; Mark Jackson, "Film Reviews: *Lagos/Koolhaas*," *Visual Anthropology Review* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 97-98; Stephen Marr, "Worlding and Wilding: Lagos and Detroit as Global Cities," 15-16; Ananya Roy, "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism," *International Journal of Urban Regional Research* 35, no. 2 (March 2011): 227-28.

African city for the first time. In knowing next to nothing about Lagos prior to visiting it, Koolhaas and his research team drive through the city trying to understand why there are so many street hawkers, why marketplaces are so densely packed, and why people were collecting objects from large garbage sites. The architect, born and raised in Europe, and living between Boston and Rotterdam, was not used to such economic extremes, and therefore, did not understand how much of Lagos' economy derived from workers in manual labor that was unregulated, but monitored, by the state.

After interviewing several Lagosians, including a television host, a street hawker, and a danfo driver, Koolhaas begins to understand that citizens found alternative means of employment if they could not work for the government or private corporations. Though street trading and danfo driving are not formally regulated by the state, and therefore considered informal, workers are still very connected to formal economic systems, having to pay for the items they sell, oftentimes imported from overseas,[330] and having to bribe officials to prevent arrest.

Lagos/Koolhaas represents Lagos through Koolhaas' eyes as a spectacle of informality, human inventiveness, overpopulation, and multiplicity. Through footage of hundreds of men and women selling household goods, foods, and jewelry to commuters returning home from their drive between the commercial business district on Lagos Island to the mainland or in the densely packed Oshodi market, viewers see human beings moving throughout the city and engaging in local commerce. In addition, as a scholar and an architect unfamiliar with how Lagosians create ways of survival, Koolhaas

[330] Charles Schmidt, "Unfair Trade: e-Waste in Africa," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 114, no. 4 (April 2006): 234.

takes his footage of privately-owned recycling plants and Alaba electronics markets, enhancing his fascination through dynamic editing and integrating voiceovers and music. By manipulating his footage of Lagos, Koolhaas is able to push his perspective of the city as the new frontier of urban modernism onto his audiences.

However, viewers can read the architect's film in a variety of different ways. Audiences unfamiliar with Lagos may find the city as awe-inspiring as Koolhaas, or they may find his methodology flawed since he is not a silent observer simply recording what he sees in front of him, but a participant observer who engages with locals and then affects his recordings to emphasize his own point-of-view. In representing Lagos as a spectacle, Lagosians, Nigerians, and other urban-based African communities, even members of African descent living abroad, may find *Lagos/Koolhaas* as another form of colonial perspectives on a black space. Lagosians find ways to survive because there is no other option, but this does not mean that young men wish to spend their days selling on roads, especially if they are educated; they may be doing so simply because they have been unsuccessful in finding other employment. In emphasizing "differences" in *Lagos/Koolhaas*, the architect rearticulates the notion that African spaces are somehow in pure juxtaposition with Western spaces, rather than considering how the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of colonial control, such as racial segregation, over cities, like Lagos, ultimately contributed to their current economic and sociopolitical conditions. Though Koolhaas seemed to want to represent Lagos' dynamism and ability to thrive within problematic conditions, he continues a discourse of Lagos as surviving in spite of

its difficulties rather than a space that is transforming and re-making itself on its own terms, having been affected by Western political and economic policies.

CONCLUSION

In September 2016, two major historical sites in Lagos were demolished for unknown development projects. On September 10th, the Ilojo Bar on Lagos Island was destroyed. It was a Brazilian-style building constructed in 1855 by the Fernandez family later bought by another family, the Olaiya's, in 1933. In 1956 Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments deemed it a national monument despite years of neglect, and was then given to the Lagos State Government for preservation. Yet the structure was still flattened after deemed uninhabitable by the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) that summer. However, the family had previously contacted local state agencies repeatedly requesting repairs, but nothing had occurred.[331]

Approximately two weeks later, the Chief J.K. Randle Memorial Hall, Dr. J.K. Randle Swimming Pool, and Dr. J.K. Randle Love Garden were also demolished for an unexplained development opportunity. Nigerian physician J.K. Randle (1855-1928) built the sites in 1928 to teach young Lagosians how to swim after noticing many were drowning trying to cross the Lagos lagoon due to a lack of accessible parks. These public spaces were given to the Lagos City Council to manage with donated funds for their upkeep. However, as with the Ilojo Bar, the Lagos State Government destroyed them without letting the Randle family know.[332] These two tragic tales are just more recent examples of Lagos' continual transformation. Decaying historical buildings and sites in governmental protection are demolished to promote new economic development

---

331 "161-year-old Ilojo Bar demolished," *The Nation*, September 10, 2016, accessed December 5, 2016, http://thenationonlineng.net/161-year-old-ilojo-bar-demolished/.

332 Patrick Dele Cole, "The witches in J.K. Randle Hall, Onikan," *The Vanguard*, November 22, 2016, accessed December 5, 2016, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/11/witches-j-k-randle-hall-onikan/.

initiatives. While the new developments may bring construction jobs and infrastructure to the city, one wonders if these new structured, both located in Lagos' business district, will be geared towards wealthy Lagosians and expatriates, and not towards the middle or working classes as the previous structures were.

The Ilojo Bar's presence now only resides in the personal histories of older Lagosians and the work of Nigerian photographer Ayodele Ojo (b. 1964). He photographed the building as part of his series chronicling Nigeria's international architectural legacy during the colonial era. His untitled image (exact date unknown) is a digitally tinted black-and-white photograph of the Ilojo Bar with pedestrians and street hawkers passing by the front facade (fig. 4.1).[333] Ojo presents the building before its destruction, a dilapidated edifice with ornate design. However, he also frames the structure beautifully, taking a black-and-white photograph and digitally altering it so the building sits magestically against a colored sky, full of clouds at sunset. Moreover, the scene emphasizes working-class Lagosians using the building as a site for trading, relaxing and communal interaction, demonstrating its participation in urban life despite its decaying state. Street hawkers, women, men and children move across the frame with the clothes tinted in bright reds, purples, greens, and yellows. Working-class citizens living in and utilizing the bar were not concerned about its sad state, using it as a home and place of business. Unfortunately, its heritage status was not enough to save one of the few remaining Brazilian structures in Lagos.

---

333 "Dreams from my Roots: Between tradition and modern architecture," *The Nation*, March 12, 2015, accessed December 5, 2016, http://thenationonlineng.net/dreams-roots-tradition-modern-architecture/.

Ojo's image is similar to Akinbiyi's image of Broad Street, since both artists present older architectural styles no longer existing in Lagos. Moreover, they use architecture to bring awareness to the city's complex and global history, specifically Lagos' Brazilian community, which survives today through familial surnames, such as Silva or Fernandez, or culinary traditions. The buildings in Akinbiyi's and Ojo's images demonstrate how historic sites are not considered necessary for preservation, and even if they are, they may ultimately be developed into new commercial or residential enterprises for wealthy individuals. With every destruction causing the city to shift and change, photographic images, such as Akinbiyi's and Ojo's, become records and visual interpretations of Lagos' past, present, and future.

Over the course of my dissertation, I have examined how photographic depictions representing both Lagos' physical and conceptual transformations at the end of the twentieth century show not only recent shifts, but ones that occurred dating back to the city's British annexation in 1861. Lagos' history goes back over 500 years and numerous layers of shifts have occurred over that period. Remnants of the past can still be found if one knows where to look and artists, like Akinbiyi, are always searching for them. His image also reminds viewers that with destruction comes rebirth. All of the buildings in *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] (fig. 1.1) were built as spaces to help create a new vision for Lagos. With each new structure the city was given new life and a new identity. Nkanga's *Tollgate to Ibadan #10* (fig. 2.1) and Koolhaas' *Lagos/Koolhaas* (figs. 3.1-3.5) both represented Lagos at its present moment with allusions to future shifts. For Nkanga, the city was at a physical and spiritual crossroads

as it expanded into Nigeria's interior. For Koolhaas, Lagos was a spectacle of local ingenuity and the possible future model for global urbanization. There is no way to know if either artist's visual speculation is correct, since no one can predict the future yet they do give possibilities and situations to consider. What all three artists demonstrate effectively is that Lagos is never static. Althrough each of their works, it is clear that the city will always evolve, but it is unclear as to who benefits.

While I was able to conduct close readings on three images depicting various Lagos shifts, as well as illustrating each artist's aesthetics, in the context of the socio-economic and political histories of Lagos, my project could have expand further. I plan eventually to turn my dissertation into a group exhibition on lens-based imagery of Lagos with a large accompanying catalogue, including multiple essays focusing on individual artists who have created work about the city. By featuring specific artists, viewers can focus on singular visions of city and compare themes, sights, and ideas. This format will also allow me to present artists across time, giving a visual chronological timeline of Lagos over the past century. Some of these older artists, such as J.D. Okhai Ojeikere, were mentioned in my introduction. Ojeikere's Lagos images have only recently been shown in an exhibition entitled *J.D. Okhai Ojeikere: Moments of Beauty* at the Kiasma Museum in 2011, as part of ARS 11, Finland's largest international exhibition of contemporary art.[334] Images by other major and lesser-known Nigerian photographers of Ojeikere's and Akinbiyi's generation, representing the long-standing port trade and land

[334] Centre for Contemporary Art Lagos: http://www.ccalagos.org/archive/2011-jd-okhai-ojeikere.

reclamation efforts on the city's beach, add further layers to Lagos' complex history and future.

There is also much more research that can occur with each of my case studies, which highlight related Lagos projects or nuances within the same series. In Akinbiyi's *All Roads* series, *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] was one of many representing Lagos. I plan to examine more images from the artist's series, since Akinbiyi's Lagos archive is much larger than what was discussed here. I focused on *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk] because viewers can easily see over one hundred years of history within one scene, yet the context of the location on Broad Street and what the architecture signified required much more in-depth explanation. Other images in his series, such as *Untitled* [Painted danfo] (fig. 4.2, 1992), make apparent his interest in the adaptation of longstanding Yoruba spiritual beliefs within an urban locale, while the aforementioned *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community] (fig. 1.8) represent Lagos' problematic urban renewal initiatives. Both of these other images each require lengthy readings, since they highlight other ways in which the city is constantly remaking itself. In addition, his *All Roads* series takes place in several other cities across the African continent, which leads to questions about possible patterns across spaces or questions about extreme differences. Finally, I did not investigate the artist's process of walking the city to find sights of visual interest. Akinbiyi purposefully explores Lagos by foot so he can slowly absorb the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of a place he knows intimately, but he relearns them anew each time he

returns. These other elements are critical areas for further research, but that will require concentrated amounts of time.

Nkanga's *Lagos to Ibadan #10* is another solitary image taken from a much larger project. The artist has over a dozen other images in her *Road Series*, many of which could have just as easily brought forth her visual discussion on Lagos' road accident epidemic, as well as her allusion to spirits connecting with humanity along the city's major roadways. I chose *Lagos to Ibadan #10*, however, because the central object in the scene, the danfo, is an easily recognizable symbol of Lagos, while also referencing the more universal theme of public transportation. In addition, its abandonment conjured immediate questions that, I felt, viewers would gravitate to. The artist also has two other series on Lagos, of which I touched upon one image. Nkanga's *Untitled #1* from her *Things Have Fallen* series (fig. 2.10) is a collection of images taken along the Lekki-Epe Expressway showing a rural landscape being urbanized. As more migrants move to Lagos, but are unable to afford housing in the center of the city, many find or create homes along the ever-expanding periphery. Just as *Road Series* represented the city expanding in one direction, *Things Have Fallen* shows that same growth in another area. In my comparative analysis, I touched upon the title of Nkanga's series and its connection to the literature of Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe and Irish poet William Butler Yeats; however, further research on the relationship between images and texts would be fruitful. All three artists suggest a pessimistic future for the United Kingdom and for Nigeria throughout time. I plan to investigate this connection further and to explore how Nkanga interprets these earlier texts in visual form. Moreover, a close

reading of the several images in the series might offer a better understanding of any similarities or differences in her artistic approach.

Finally, Nkanga created a third photographic series on Lagos entitled *Emptied Remains* (2004-05), completed in the same year as *Things Have Fallen*, which I also did not examine here, but reaffirms how many simultaneous fluctuations are occurring throughout the city. The photographs are of an abandoned tollbooth connecting Victoria Island to the upscale, gated community of Lekki. The series explores the artist's interest in the city's abandoned spaces. While the Nigerian government may destroy these types of sights, Nkanga finds in these sites fragments of past dreams and hopes. Similar to Akinbiyi's investigation of historical buildings, older, rotting buildings, or areas in Nkanga's *Emptied Remains* are markers of past possibilities, and as they break down, they show the process of actual transformation. Both of these latter series emphasize Nkanga's interest in Lagos' ongoing progression in the twenty-first century.

Additional areas of exploration in this project are other scenes in Koolhaas' *Lagos/Koolhaas*, as well as his later film *Lagos: Wide & Close* (2005). In the chapter on his film, I conducted a close reading of one scene demonstrating how the architect/researcher/filmmaker represented Lagosian adaptation and ingenuity as an urban spectacle. There are numerous other cinematic scenes that also highlight this idea; however, the one I chose is relatable to Lagosians and those who have visited the city, since street hawkers are present all over the city. Moreover, footage of Winner's Church Bishop David Oyedepo teaching his parishioners that "life is a business" and that God provides if a person organizes his or her life around a capitalist mentality focused too

much on an individualized form of spectacle. Another important scene is at a privately owned recycling plant underneath two major highways just outside Lagos City with Koolhaas interviewing one of the workers. Here viewers watch local entrepreneurs trading scrap metal, fixing them, and then selling them back to companies for a profit. In this latter case, viewers see another example of Lagosians adjusting the city's layout for economic opportunities, while with Winner's Church, citizens are taught to think in a consumerist mindset, resulting in building mega-churches, a physical manifestation of spectacle. Yet all of these scenes repeat Koolhaas' perspective of the city as larger than life and adaptable.

Another avenue I was unable to explore in Koolhaas' projects was his working relationship with Dutch director Bretgje van der Haak. She was invited by Koolhaas to participate in filming his research in Lagos and directed both films. While Koolhaas is given credit for the project and the documentaries, neither of the films would have been possible without van der Haak. I was able to interview briefly the director via skype in April 2015, but was unable to conduct an in-depth conversation on her relationship with Koolhaas on either film or to ask her if she contributed her own vision to the editing of the first film. Van der Haak directed the second film, *Lagos: Wide & Close* herself, creating an interactive DVD from the hours of footage not utilized in *Lagos/Koolhaas*. There are numerous areas of inquiry with the second film since it was not organized in a linear manner as the first one. In it, the viewer can decide between three different audio tracks and two different visual perspectives. I want to know why van der Haak decided

on that approach and if it was because she felt Lagos was too big and too complex to reduce to any one point of view.

Beyond my case studies, numerous other Nigerian and non-Nigerian artists have created, and are creating, visual images of Lagos, demonstrating how popular the city is as an artistic subject. Another future exhibition project would incorporate depictions of Lagos from all mediums, not just photography. Nigerian sculptor Dilomprizulike (b. 1960) created a large-scale installation piece entitled *Waiting for Bus* (fig. 4.3, 2003) as part of the internationally traveling exhibition *Africa Remix* (2004-07). The mixed media installation depicts a large grouping of humanoid sculptures: men, women, and children, all representing Lagos' different classes together in a queue, perpetually waiting for the bus that will never come. Dilomprizulike's installation critiques the lack of government investment in Lagos' transit and public infrastructure.[335] His work adds a three-dimensional and experiential quality to images of Lagos, since viewers can physically engage with his sculpture and perhaps better understand the toll waiting for public transportation can have on a person.

Nigerian video and installation artist Emeka Ogboh (b. 1977) also created a series of sound works entitled *Lagos Soundscapes* (fig. 4.4, 2008-09). The auditory work overlaps diegetic and non-diegetic sounds that one would encounter in Lagos: men and women calling each other and yelling in Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo, combined with birds

[335] Anthony Downey, "Curating Africa: 'Africa Remix' and the Categorical Dilemma," *Wasafiri* 20, no. 46 (2005): 48.

calling, generators humming and car and danfo horns honking.[336] Ogboh expanded his work in *Lagos State of Mind II* (2014), a temporary exhibition at the Africa Center in New York. The sound work was installed in a danfo, which the artist drove around New York for a day before being installed at the museum. His work also adds another dimension to my project, since his piece is an experimental, auditory installation, which touches upon mobility and the city's informal economies in a new way.[337]

Finally, I would like to conduct a comparative analysis on several group and solo exhibitions focused on contemporary Lagos, since this path of inquiry has never been investigated. In addition to the aforementioned *Century City* and *Africas* projects in 2013 Skoto Gallery in New York hosted a group photography exhibition entitled *Go-Slow: Diaries of Personal and Collective Stagnation in Lagos*. Organized by Nigerian-American curator Amber Croyle, *Go-Slow* featured works by ten different photographers based around the "go-slow." Photographers presented aerial perspectives of Lagos traffic, street hawkers, porters, and images of empty highways at night. The exhibition highlighted Nigerian photographers who use street scenes and present microscopic depictions of Lagos life to wider audiences.[338] More recently, in 2016, Nigerian curator and director of African Artist Foundation, Azu Nwagbogu, organized *Dey Your Lane*, an international group exhibition on Lagos at the Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR) in Brussels.

---

336 Carol Magee, "Lagos is Everywhere: Digital Sound Art and Ever-Expanding Possibilities," *Critical Interventions* 8, no. 3 (2014): 342-47.

337 "Emeka Ogbhoh & Meschac Gaba at 'Meet the Africa Center,'" *Contemporary And: Platform for International Art from African Perspectives*, September 20, 2014. Accessed online August 29, 2016: http://www.contemporaryand.com/fr/exhibition/emeka-ogboh-meschac-gaba-at-the-africa-center/.

338 Skoto Gallery: http://www.skotogallery.com/SPT-0-132--GOSLOW_Diaries_of_Personal_and_Collective_Stagnation_in_Lagos__New_Directions_in_Contemporary_Photography.asd.

The show explored photographic representations of "day-to-day Lagos" by Nigerian and European contemporary artists.[339] The group exhibition brought together different generations of artists using the photographic medium to highlight various aspects of the city.

These four exhibitions frame Lagos through the well-established themes of traffic, class, and urban sprawl, but additional inquiry might reveal subtle differences that given more nuanced representation. Their presence also reveals that Lagos continues to be a highly popular place for visual imagination for artists and curators. It is also likely that, as Lagos continues to grow and shift, exhibitions and projects will also develop. The city at the turn of the twenty-first century had a profound effect on Akinbiyi, Nkanga and Koolhaas, as well as dozens of other artists and curators. My project is part of a much bigger tale on Lagos that I hope opens new aspects of thought and exploration.

339 Azu Nwagbogu, *Dey Your Lane! Lagos Variations* (Brussels: Bozar Books, 2016): 11.

Figures

Figure 1.1 –Akinbode Akinbiyi, *Untitled* [Woman in striped dress walking across the sidewalk], *All Roads* series (1995), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 1.2 - Detail of sun breakers, Godwin and Hopwood, Allen and Hansbury's Building, Lagos, Nigeria, 1958 (photograph by John Godwin and Gillian Hopwood), Republished in Hannah Le Roux, "The Networks of Tropical Architecture," *Journal of Architecture* 8 (2003).

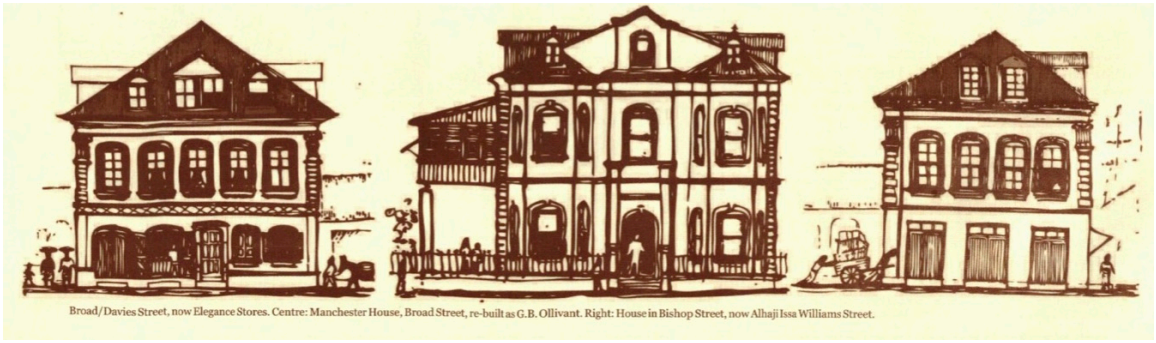

Figure 1.3 - Examples of Colonial and Brazilian Architectural styles in Lagos, Nigeria (1880-1915). Published in Kunle Akinsemoyin and Alan Vaughn-Richards, *Building Lagos* (Lagos Island: Prestige Books, 2009): 17.

Figure 1.4 - Image of a typical sidewalk and parking lot in Victoria Island, off Akin Adesola Road (April 2016). Courtesy of Ben Mendelsohn.

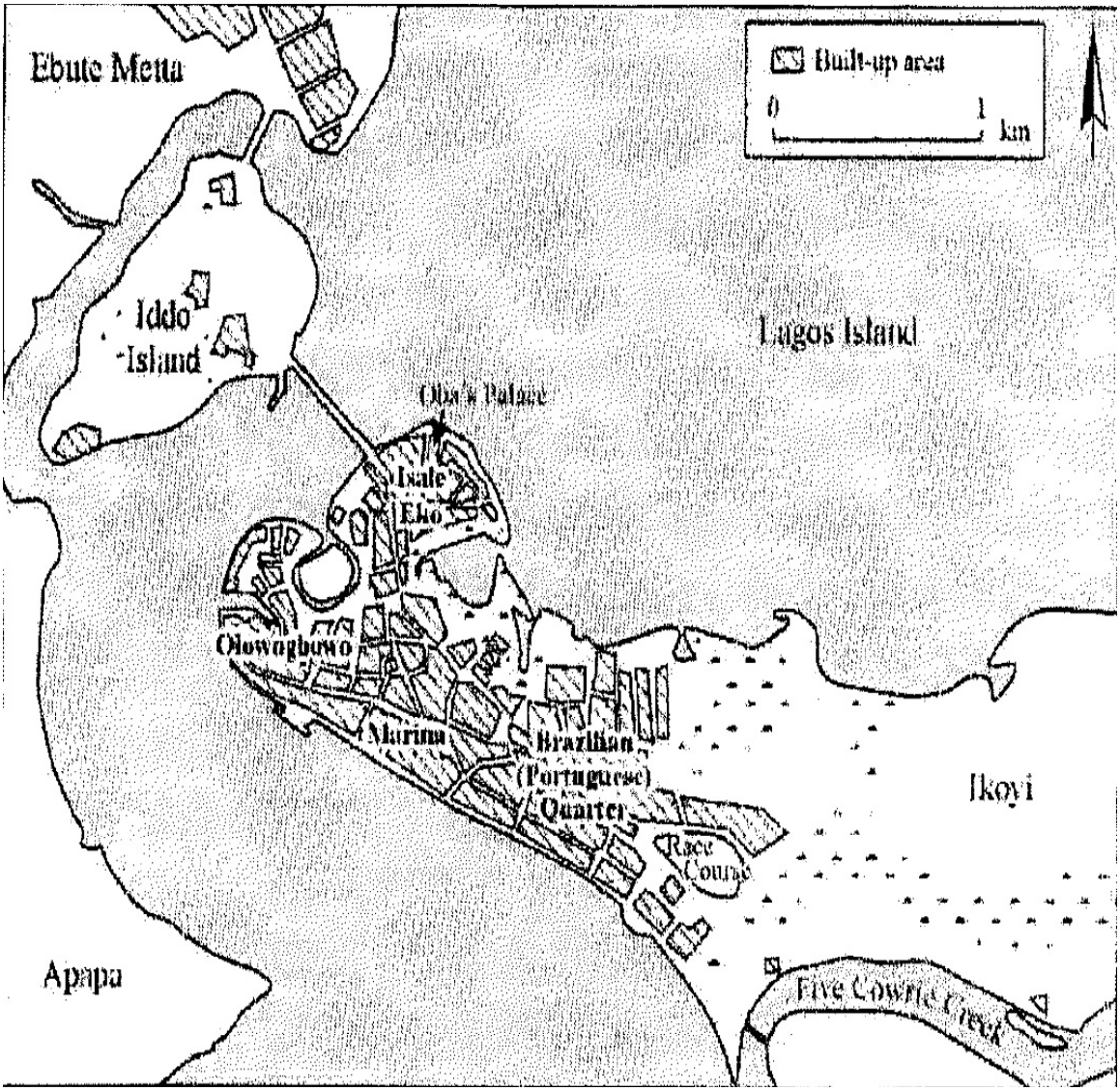

Figure 1.5 - Lagos' built-up area and its four main quarters in the1890s. Based on PRO, CO 700/Lagos 5, plan of the town of Lagos in 1883. Published in Liora Bigon, *A History of Urban Planning in two West African Colonial Capitals: Residential Segregation in British Lagos and French Dakar (1850-1930*), (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009): 46.

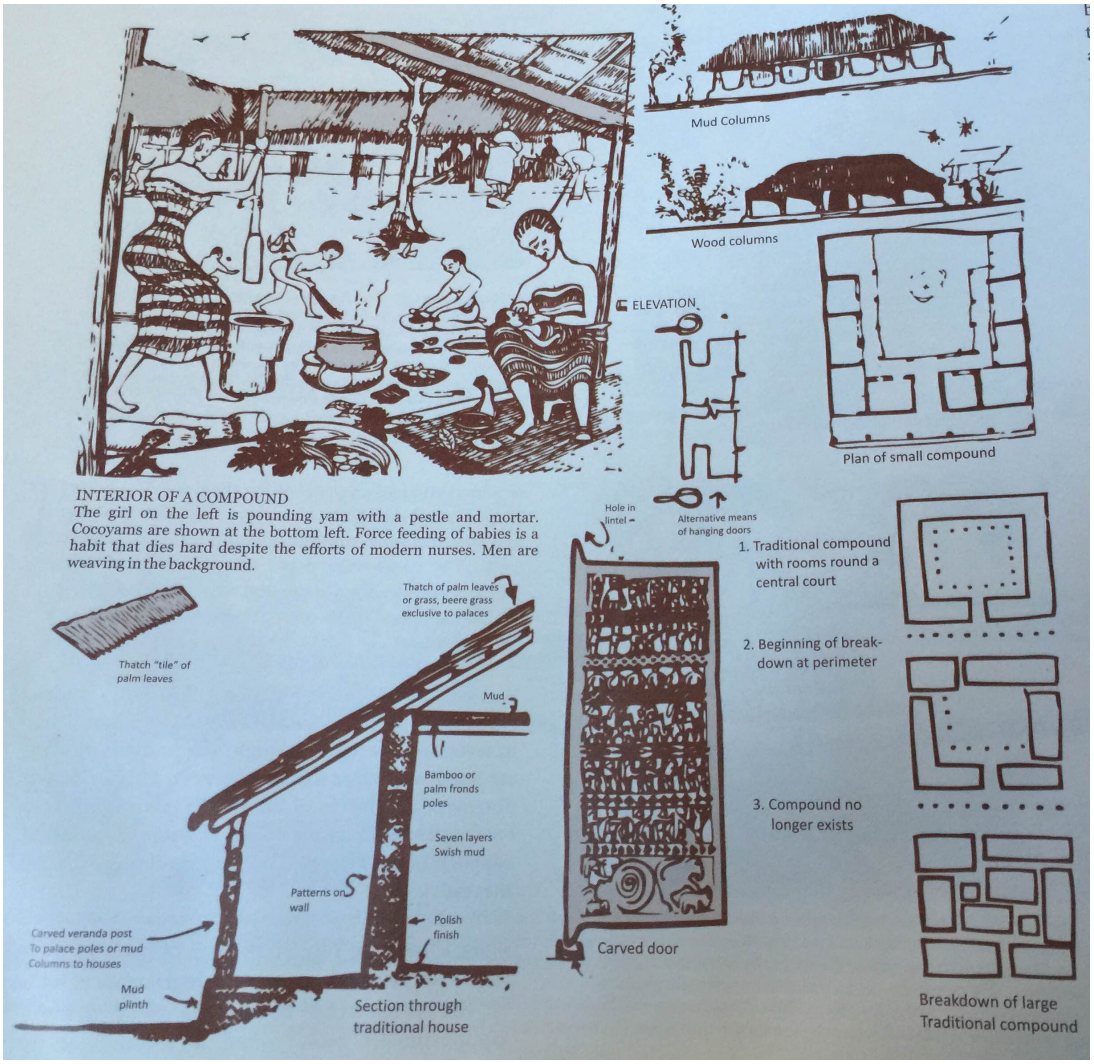

Figure 1.6 - "Interior of a compound" (2009). Published in Kunle Akinsemoyin and Alan Vaughn-Richards, *Building Lagos* (Lagos Island: Prestige Books, 2009): 8.

Figure 1.7 – J.D. Okhai Ojeikere, *Lagos City Hall* (1965), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

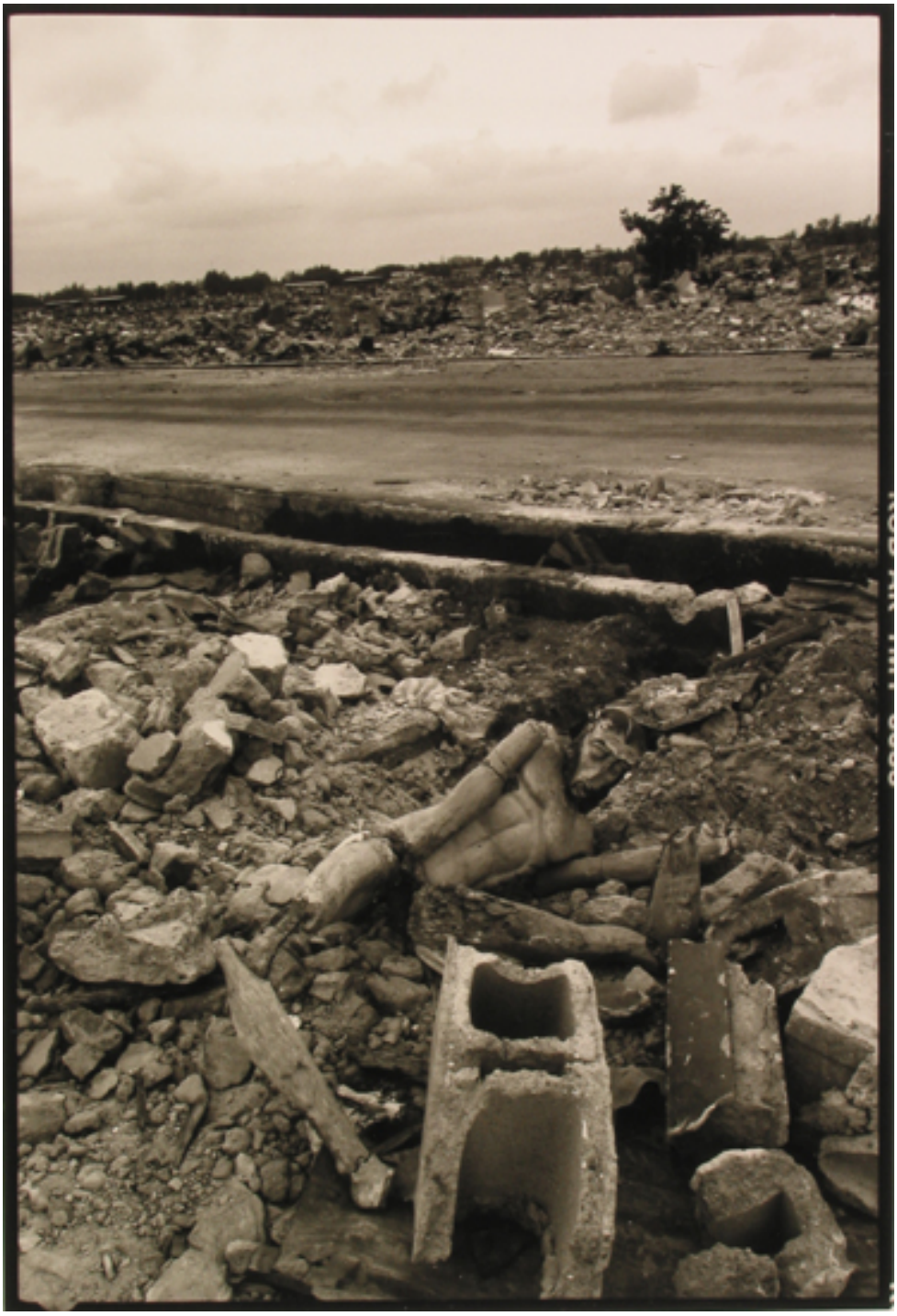

Figure 1.8 – Akinbode Akinbiyi, *Untitled* [Destroyed roadside community], *All Roads* series (1990), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.1 – Otobong Nkanga, *Tollgate to Ibadan #10*, *Road Series* (2001), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.2 – Otobong Nkanga, *Tollgate to Ibadan #5*, *Road Series* (2001), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.3 – George Osodi, *Devil Dexterity #1* (2008), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.4 – George Osodi, *Devil Dexterity #6* (2008), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.5 – Otobong Nkanga, *Tollgate to Ibadan #6*, *Road Series* (2001), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.6 – Aelbert Jansz van der Schoor, *Vanitas Still Life with Skulls on a Table* (c. 1660), oil on canvas. Collection of the Rijksmuseum.

Figure 2.7 – Male twin ibeji figures, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 19th century. Collection of the Newark Museum.

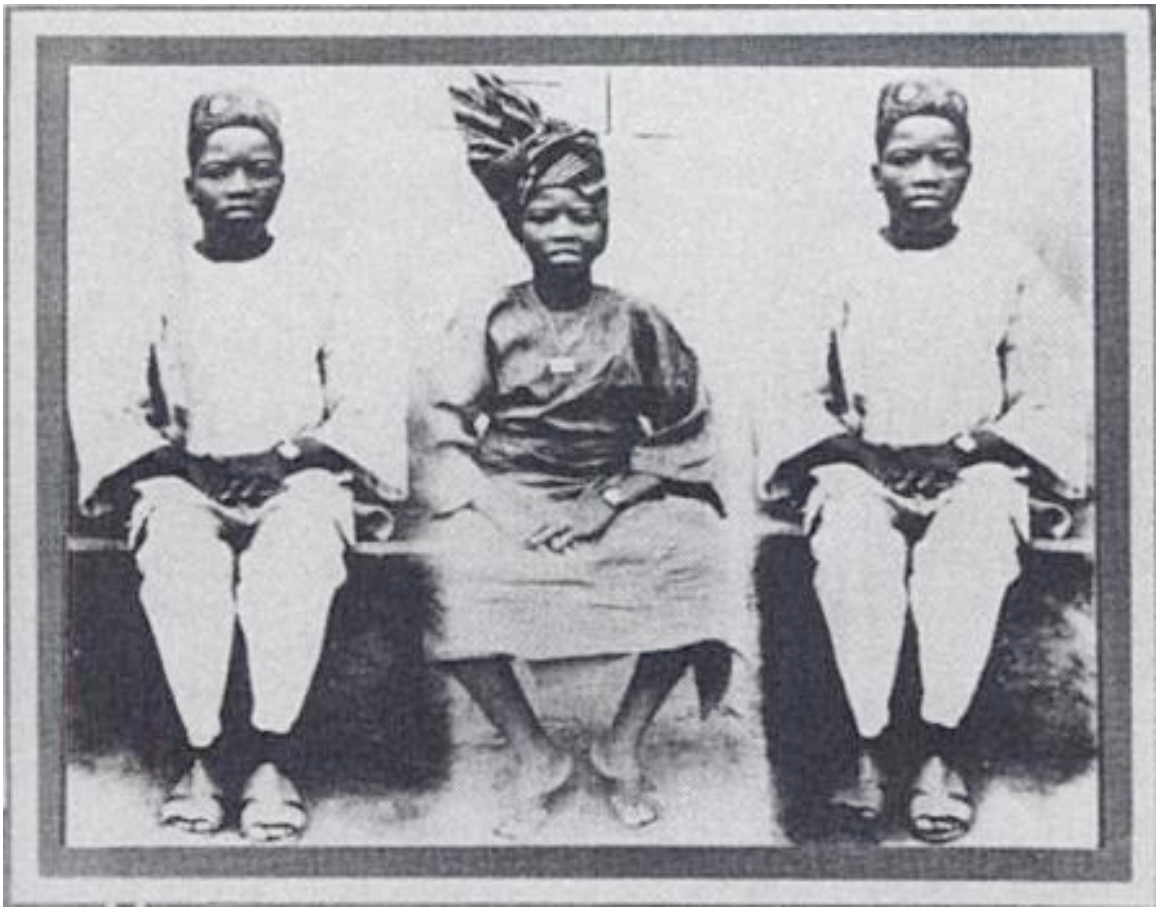

Figure 2.8 – A rare representation of triplets (1975). The two boys died, and the surviving girl was photographed as herself and in matching boy's clothes to represent her brothers. The male image was printed twice, once on either side of the girl's image to show the triplets sitting together. By Simple photo, published in Stephen F. Sprague, "Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba See Themselves," in *Photography's Other Histories*, eds. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Raleigh-Durham: Duke University Press, 2003): 255.

Figure 2.9 – Metal-framed and glass-covered tintype post-mortem shot of a baby, lying in bed with a flower, United States, mid-19th century. Collection of the National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Collection.

Figure 2.10 – Otobong Nkanga, *Untitled #1*, *Things Have Fallen* series (2004-05), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

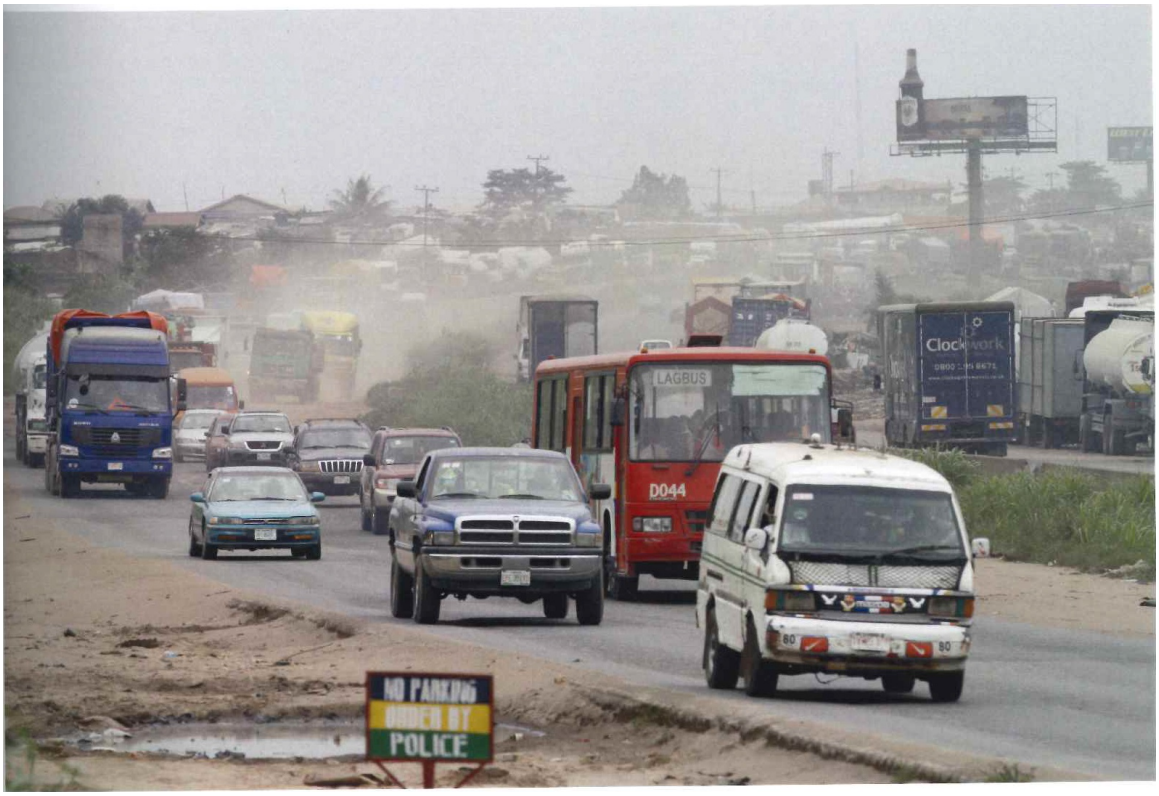

Figure 2.11 – Akintunde Akinleye, *Spiritual Highway* (2013). Published in *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos* (2015).

Figure 2.12 – Akintunde Akinleye, *MFA Prayer City billboard* (2013). Published in *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos* (2015).

Figure 3.1 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

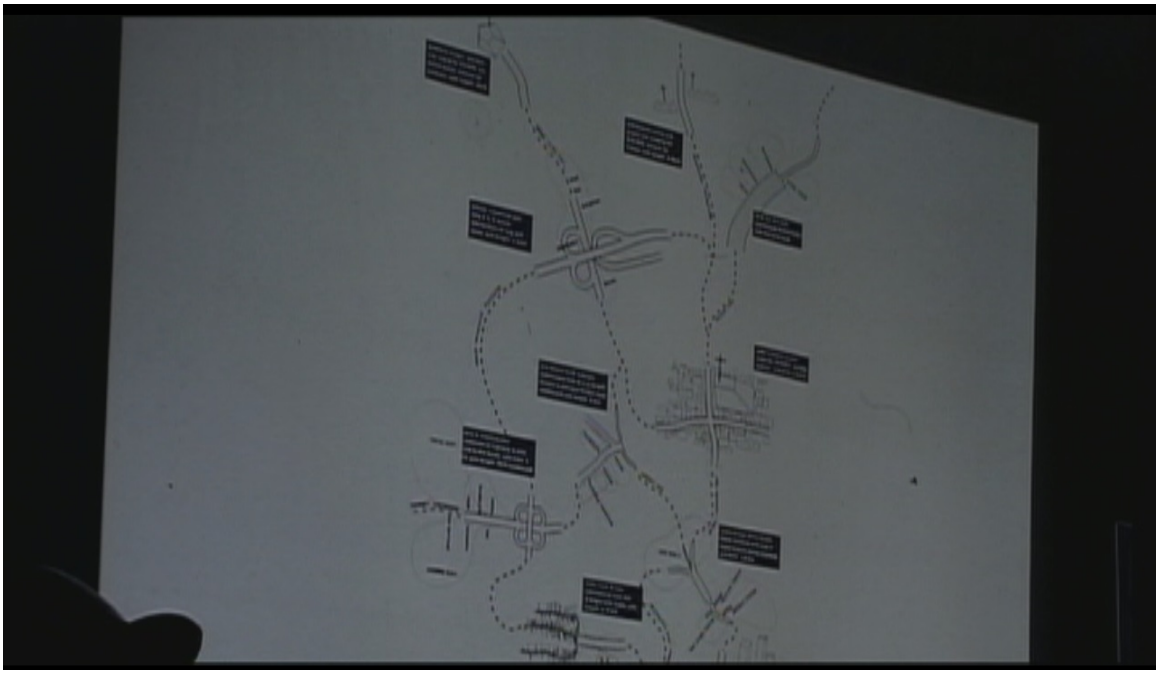

Figure 3.2 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

Figure 3.3 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

Figure 3.4 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

Figure 3.5 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

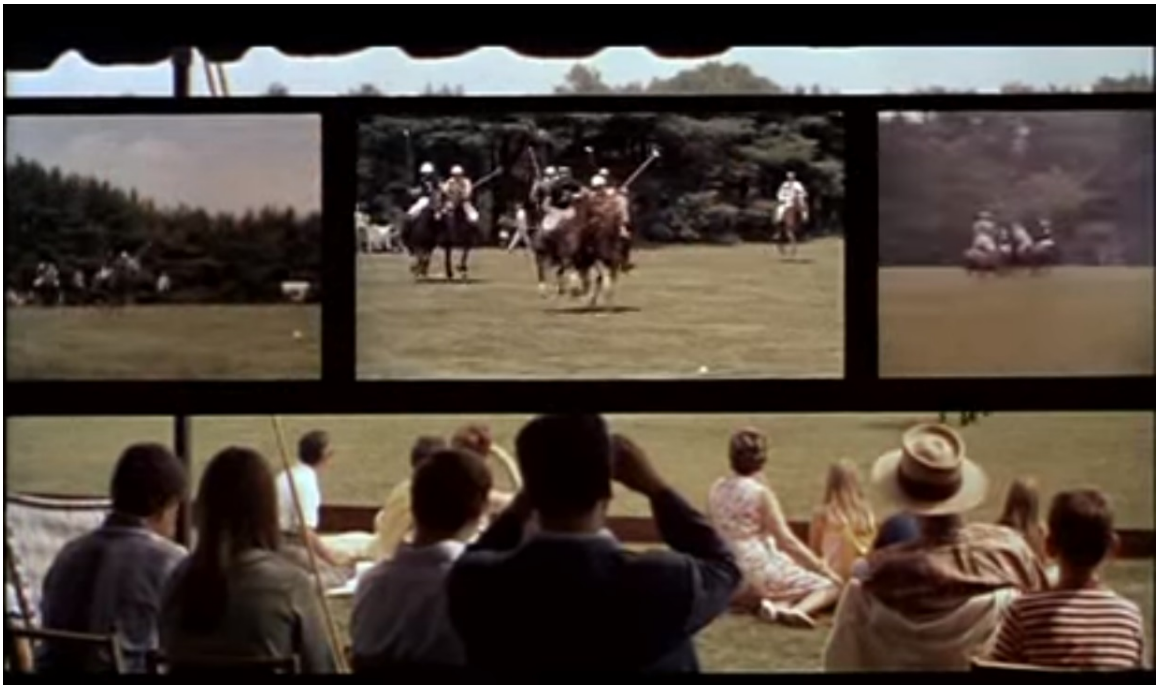

Figure 3.6 – Norman Jewison, film still from *Thomas Crown Affair* (1968).

Figure 3.7 – Lorna Simpson, film still from *Corridor* (2003).

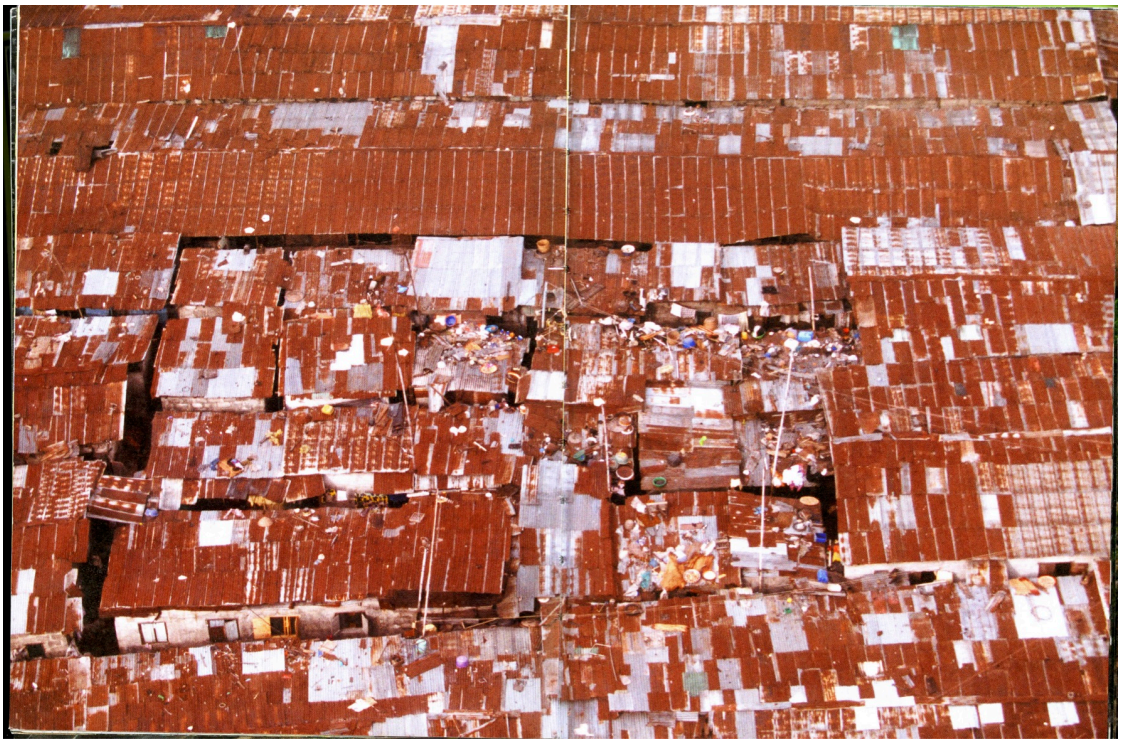

Figure 3.8 – Edgar Cleijne, *Untitled*, 2001. Published in Rem Koolhaas, *Mutations: Harvard Project on the City* (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2001): 666-67.

Figure 3.9 – Edgar Cleijne, *Untitled*, 2001. Published in Rem Koolhaas, *Mutations: Harvard Project on the City* (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2001):658-59.

Figure 3.10 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

Figure 3.11 – Rem Koolhaas, film still still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

Figure 3.12 – Rem Koolhaas, detail film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

Figure 3.13 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

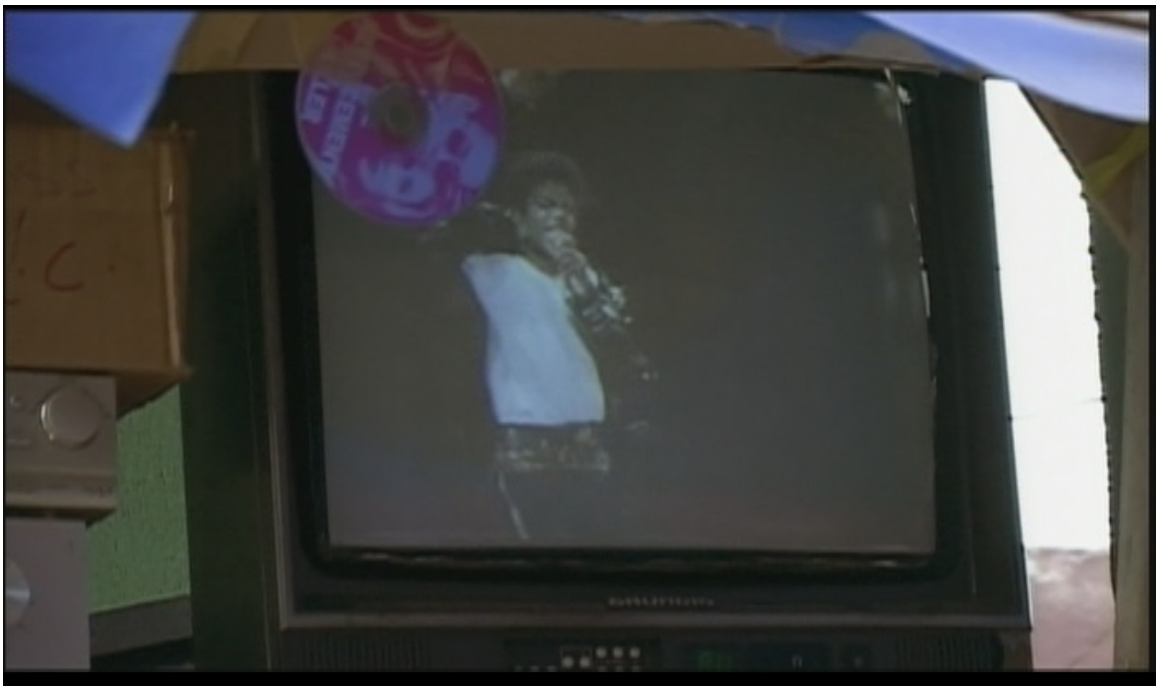

Figure 3.14 – Rem Koolhaas, film still from *Lagos/Koolhaas* (2001).

Figure 4.1 – Ayodele Ojo, *Ilojo Bar* (date unknown). Published in "'Dreams From My Roots' Exhibition, A Collection of Architectural Photographs, Holds in Lagos" Published in *TheSimonAtebaNews*, Washington, DC, February 29, 2016, **https://www.simonateba.com/2016/02/29/dreams-from-my-roots-exhibition-a-collection-of-architectural-photographs-holds-in-lagos/**

Figure 4.2 – Akinbode Akinbiyi, *Untitled* [Painted Danfo] (1992), c-print. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 4.3 – Dilomprizulike (aka The Junk Man), *Waiting for Bus* (2003). Published in *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent*, Simon Njami, ed., (New York: DAP, 2005).

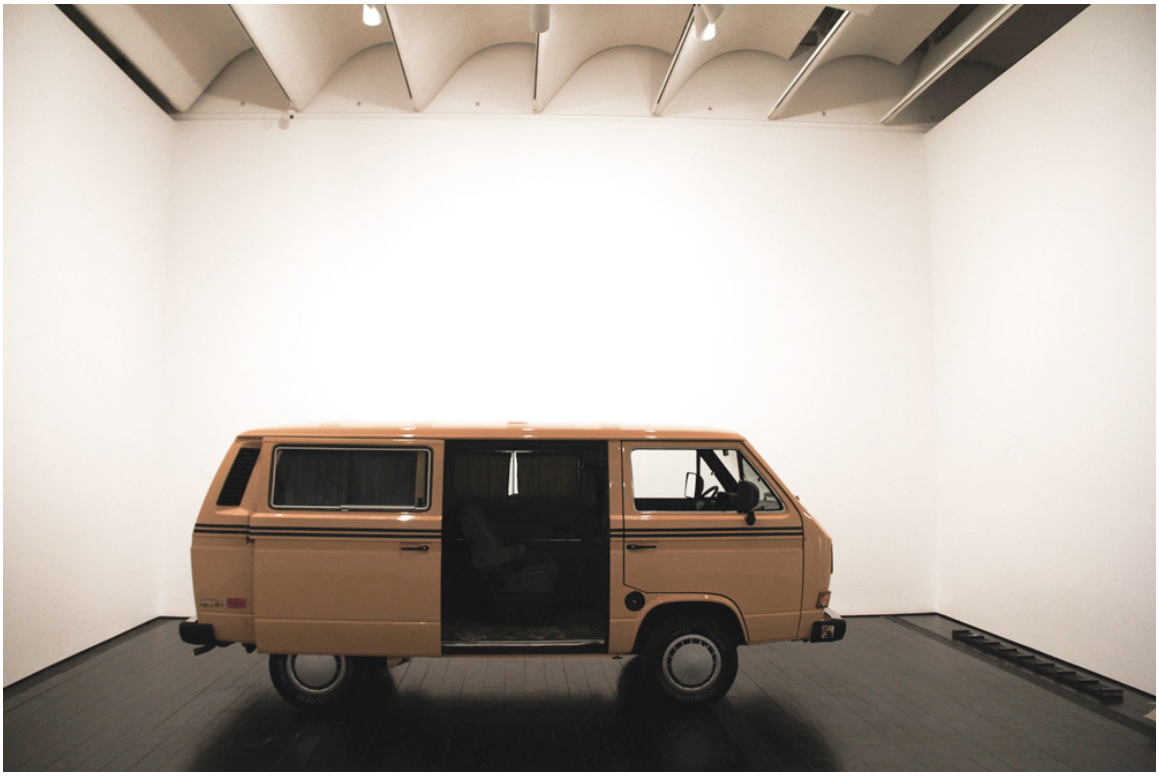

Figure 4.4 – Emeka Ogboh, *Lagos Soundscapes* (2008-09). Published in "In Conversation Emeka Ogboh on Lagos, Listening to the world in a Musical Way," in *Another Africa*, July 28, 2014, **http://www.anotherafrica.net/art-culture/in-conversation-with-emeka-ogboh-on-lagos-and-listening-to-the-world-in-a-musical-way**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Anglo-African [Lagos], September 5, 1863.

"Old Lagos." *Nigeria Magazine*. 38 (1952): 122-29.

"On the buses in Lagos," February 28, 2001, BBC News: newsbbc.co.uk/2/hi/Africa/1186572.stm.

"Another 100 Buses Seized in Lagos, SEE Why," February 17, 2014: www.natalagoschannel10.gov.ng/2014/02/17/community/another-100-buses-seized-in-lagos-see-why/

Emeka Ogbhoh & Meschac Gaba at 'Meet the Africa Center,'" *Contemporary And: Platform for International Art from African Perspectives*, September 20, 2014. http://www.contemporaryand.com/fr/exhibition/emeka-ogboh-meschac-gaba-at-the-africa-center/.

"Dreams from my Roots: Between tradition and modern architecture," *The Nation*, March 12, 2015, http://thenationonlineng.net/dreams-roots-tradition-modern-architecture/.

"161-year-old Ilojo Bar demolished," *The Nation*, September 10, 2016, accessed December 5, 2016, http://thenationonlineng.net/161-year-old-ilojo-bar-demolished/.

Adelekan, Ibidun. "Vulnerability of Poor Urban Costal Communities to Flooding in Lagos, Nigeria." *Environment & Urbanization* 22:2 (October 2010): 433-50.

Aderibigbe, A.B. "Early History of Lagos to About 1850." In *Lagos: The Development of an African City*, A. B. Aderbigbe, ed. Lagos, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria, 1975.

Achebe, Chinua. "Colonialist Criticism." In *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays*. New York: Anchor Press, 1975.

Adesokan, Akin. "Anticipating Nollywood: Lagos circa 1996." *Social Dynamics* 37, no. 1 (March 2011): 96-110.

Agbola, Tunde. *The Architecture of Fear: Urban Design and Construction Response to Urban Violence in Lagos, Nigeria*. Ibadan: IFRA, 1997.

Agbola, Tunde and A.M. Jinadu. "Forced Eviction and Forced Relocation in Nigeria: The Experience of those Evicted from Maroko in 1990." *Environment and Urbanization* 9:2 (October 1997): 271-288.

Ajayi, E.A., R.O. Ajetunmobi, and S.A. Akindele, eds. *History of the Awori of Lagos State*. Lagos: Adenrian Ogunsanya College of Education, 1998.

Akinsemoyin, Kunle, and Alan Vaughan-Richards. *Building Lagos*. Lagos: Prestige Books, 2009.

Albrecht, Theodore. “From Super Bowl to Salty Snacks: Opportunities for Advocacy Presented by the Use of ‘Classical’ Music.” *Choral Journal* 51, no. 8 (2011): 47-8.

Aluko, O.E. “The Impact of Urbanization on Housing Development: the Lagos Experience, Nigeria.” *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management* 3:3 (2010): 65-71.

Akanle, Olayinka. “Kinship Socio-Economics of Nigerian International Migrants.” *Diaspora Studies* 4:2 (2011): 105-123.

Aklane, Olayinka, and Olanrewau Akinpelu Olutayo. “Kinship Construction Variability among Nigeria International Migrants: The Context of Contemporary Diaspora.” Human Affairs 21 (2011): 470-80.

Apter, Andrew. “FESTAC for Black People: Oil Capitalism and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria.” *MPublishing, University of Michigan Library Passage* (1993): http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4761530.0006.002.

Archibald, Priscilla. "Urban Transculturations." *Social Text* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 91-114.

Atubi, Augustus, and Patience Onokala. “Contemporary Analysis of Variability in Road Traffic Accidents in Lagos State, Nigeria.” *African Geographical Review* 28:1 (March 2009): 11-41.

Awolalu, J. Omosade. “The Yoruba Philosophy of Life.” *Présence Africaine* 73 (1970): 20-38.

Awolalu, J. Omosade. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. London: Longman, 1979.

Badejo, B., and T.I. Salau. “Transportation and the Environment: The Lagos Example.” *Transportation* (May 2010): 1-18.

Baker, Pauline. *Urbanization and Political Change: The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

Barredo, Jośe and Luca Demicheli. “Urban Sustainability in Developing Countries’ Megacities: Modelling and Predicting Future Urban Growth in Lagos.” *Cities* 20:5 (2003): 297-310.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

Bastien, G.J., P.A. Williams, B. Schepens, N.C. Heglund. “Effect of Load and Speed on the Energetic Cost of Human Walking.“ *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, 94:1 (May 2005): 76-83.

Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Benimerad, Fouad, Ravi Sinha, and Friedmann Wenzel. "Megacities – Mega-risks." *Natural Hazards* 42:3 (September 2007): 481-91.

Berg, Olof, and Kristian Kreiner. "Corporate Architecture: Turning Physical Settings into Symbolic Resources." In *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*, Pasquale Gagliardi, ed. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1990.

Bigon, Liora. "Sanitation and Street Layout in Early Colonial Lagos: British and Indigenous Conceptions, 1851-1900." *Planning Perspectives* 20 (2005): 247-69.

Bigon, Liora. "Between Local and Colonial Perceptions: The History of Slum Clearances in Lagos (Nigeria), 1924-1960." *African and Asian Studies* 7 (2008): 49-76.

Bigon, Liora. *A History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals: Residential Segregation in British Lagos and French Dakar (1850-1930)*. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009.

Bizzocchi, Jim. "The Fragmented Frame: The Poetics of the Split-Screen." Published online 2009, web.mit.edu: http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit6/papers/Bizzocchi.pdf.

Blazwick, Iwona. *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis*. London: Tate, 2001.

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill: 1990.

Braimoh, Ademola and Takashi Onishi. "Spatial Determinants of Urban Land Use Changes in Lagos, Nigeria." *Land Use Policy* 24 (2007): 502-15.

Brennan, Ellen. "Population, Urbanization, Environment and Security: A Summary of the Issues." *Environmental Change & Security Project Report* 5 (Summer 1999): 4-14.

Bromley, Nicholas. *Rights of Passage: Sidewalks and the Regulation of Public Flow*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Burton, Richard. "My Wanderings in West Africa." *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country,* February 1863, 138-39.

Chilson, Peter. *Riding the Demon: On the Road in West Africa*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999.

Chiluwa, Innocent. "Nigerian English in Informal Email Messages." *English World-Wide* 31:1 (2010): 40-61.

Chong, Hyun Ju, Eunju Jeong, and Soo Ji Kim. "Listener's Perception of Intended Emotions in Music." *International Journal of Contents* 9:4 (December 2013): 78-85.

Chukuezi, Comfort. "Urban Informal Sector and Unemployment in Third World Cities: The Situation in Nigeria." *Asian Social Science* 6:8 (August 2010): 131-37.

Cole, Patrick. *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Cole, P. D. "Lagos Society in the Nineteenth Century." In *Lagos: The Development of an African City*, A. B. Aderbigbe, ed. Lagos, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria, 1975.

Cole, Patrick. "The witches in J.K. Randle Hall, Onikan," *The Vanguard*, November 22, 2016, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/11/witches-j-k-randle-hall-onikan/.

Cresswell, Tim. *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Crompton, D.W.T. and L. Savioli. "Intestinal Parasitic Infections and Urbanization." *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 71:1 (1993): 1-7.

Cox, Elizabeth, and Erica Anderssen. *Survive Lagos*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1984.

Daepp, Mariam. "Five Questions for Akinbode Akinbiyi." Goethe-Institut South Africa (April 2013): http://www.geothe.de/ins/za/en/joh/kul/mag/fra/108174718.html.

Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso, 2007.

Dayaratne, Ranjith, and Raja Samarawickrama. "Empowering communities in the peri-urban areas of Colombo." *Environment and Urbanization* 15:1 (April 2003): 101-10.

Deane, Paul D. "Metaphors of center and periphery in Yeats' *The Second Coming*." *Journal of Pragmatics* 24 (1995): 627-42.

de Brigard, Emile. "The History of Ethnographic Film." In *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, Third Edition, Paul Hockings, ed. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003.

Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books, 1995.

de Certeau, Michel. "Walking in the City. " in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.

Decker, Stephanie. "Solid Intentions: An Archival Ethnography of Corporate Architecture and Organizational Remembering." *Organization* 21:4 (2014): 522-36.

DeWalt, Kathleen, and Bille DeWalt. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. New York: Altamira Press, 2010.

Dibbets, Karl. "The Introduction of Sound." In *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Diouf, Mamadou. "Engaging Postcolonial Cultures: African Youth and Public Space." *African Studies Review* 46:2 (September 2003): 1-12.

Dorrian, Mark. "The Aerial Views: Notes for Cultural History." *Strates* 13 (2007): 1-17.

Downey, Anthony. "Curating Africa: 'Africa Remix' and the Categorical Dilemma." *Wasafiri* 20:46 (2005): 47-55.

Douglas, Thomas. *African Traditional Religion in the Modern World*. Jefferson: MacFarland, 2015.

Drewal, Margaret Thompson. *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Drapper, Robert. "Africa's First City." *National Geographic* (January 2015); 78-106.

Echeruo, Michael. *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of the Nineteenth Century Lagos Life*. London: Macmillan, 1977.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *The Film Sense*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970.

Emordi, E.C. and O.M. Osiki. "Lagos: the 'villagized' city." *Information, Society and Justice* 2:1 (December 2008): 95-109.

Enwezor, Okwui. *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography*. Göttingen, Germany: STEIDL, 2006.

Essia, Uwem. "The Social Economy of Child Witch Labeling in Nigeria: The Case of Akwa Ibom State." *Science Journal of Psychology* (2012): 1-11.

Falola, Toyin. and Matthew Heaton, *History of Nigeria*. Leiden: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Filani, Michael. "A City in Transition: Vision, Reform, and Growth in Lagos, Nigeria." In *Cities Alliance: Cities without Slums*. Ibadan: The Foundation for Development and Environmental Initiatives, 2011.

Forstall, Richard, Richard Greene, and Jack Pick. "Which are the Largest? Why Lists of Major Urban Areas Vary so Greatly." *Tijdschrift voor Economishche en Sociale Geografie* 100: 3 (2009): 277-297.

Fourchard, Lauren. "Les Rues de Lagos: Espaces Disputés/Spaces Partagés." *Flux* 4, no. 66-67 (2006): 62-72.

Fourcard, Laurent. "Lagos Koolhaas and Partisan Politics in Nigeria." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35:1 (2010): 40-56.

Fraser, Benjamin. "The Ills Aerial Photography: Latin American from Above." *Chasqui: revista de literatura latinoamericana* 39:2 (November 2010): 70-84.

Frenkel, Stephen and John Western. "Pretext or Prophylaxis? Racial Segregation and Malarial Mosquitos in a British Tropical Colony: Sierra Leone." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78:2 (1988): 211-28.

Frisen, Eric. “Carmina Burana: The Big Mac of Classical Music?” *Queen’s Quarterly* 188:2 (Summer 2011): 280-4.

Fry, Maxwell, and Jane Drew. *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones*. New York: Robert Krieger Publishing Company, 1964.

Gadelhak, Mahmoud, Mohaned Aly, and Hanan Sabry. “High Performance Facades: The Effect of Sun Breakers on Daylighting Performance and Energy Consumption in South Oriented Office Spaces.” In Proceedings of the Architectural Engineering Institute (AEI) Conference, State College, Pennsylvania, 2013.

Gandy, Matthew. “Learning from Lagos.” *New Left Review* 33 (May 2005): 37-53.

Gandy, Matthew. “Planning, Anti-Planning and the infrastructure Crisis Facing Metropolitan Lagos.” *Urban Studies* 43:2 (February 2006): 371-96.

Gargiani, Roberto. *Rem Koolhaas/OMA: The Construction of Merveilles*. Lausanne, Switzerland: EPFL Press, 2008.

Gilbert, Albert and Joseph Gugler. *Cities, Poverty and Development: Urbanization in the Third World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Godlewski, Joseph. “Alien and Distant: Rem Koolhaas on Film in Lagos, Nigeria.” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements* Review 21:11 (Spring 2010): 7-19.

Golub, Stephan and Jamie Hansen-Lewis. “Informal Trading Networks in West Africa: The Mourides of Senegal/the Gambia and the Yoruba of Benin/Nigeria.” In *The Informal Sector in Francophone Africa: Film Size, productivity, and institutions* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2012): 173-93.

Goodwin, John. “Lagos Views,” *Nigeria Magazine* 61 (1959): 92-103.

Goodwin, John, and Gillian Hopwood. *Sandbank City: Lagos at 150*. Lagos: Prestige Books, 2012.

Granqvist, Raoul. “Photojournalism’s White Mythologies: Eliot Elisofon and LIFE in Africa, 1959-1961.” Research in African Literatures 43, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 84-105.

Graves, Nelson P. “Drivers Dexterity: George Osodi’s Oeuvre on Safety on the Nigerian Road.” *International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 5.1:16 (January 2016): 13-26.

Grove, Allen W. “Röntgen’s Ghosts: Photography, X-Rays, and the Victorian Imagination.” *Literature and Medicine* 16:2 (1997): 141-73.

Hall, Stuart. “The Spectacle of the Other.” In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE Publications, 1997.

Haney, Erin. *Photography and Africa*. London: Reaktion Books, 2010.

Hart, Kevin. "Informal Urban Income Opportunities in Ghana," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 11, no. 1 (March 1973): 61-89.

Hart, Kevin. "Bureaucratic Form and the Informal Economy." In *Linking the Formal and Informal Economy: Concepts and Policies*, eds., Basudeb Guha-Khasnobis, Ravi Kanbur, and Elinor Ostrom. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Haynes, Jonathan. "Nollywood in Lagos: Lagos in Nollywood Films." *Africa Today* 54:2 (2007): 131-50.

Haynes, Jonathan. "Video Boom: Nigeria and Ghana." *Postcolonial Text* 3 no. 2 (2007): 1-10.

Hecker, Tim. "The Slum Pastoral: Helicopter Visuality and Koolhaas's Lagos." *Space and Culture* 13:256 (April 2010): 256-69.

Hinchcliffe, Tanis. "Aerial Photography and the Postwar Urban Planner in London." *The London Journal* 35:3 (2010): 277-88.

Hirsch, E. D., Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil. *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1993.

Home, R. K. "Town Planning, Segregation and Indirect Rule in Colonial Nigeria." *Third World Planning Review* 5:2 (1983): 165-83.

Hopkins, Antony. "Property Rights and Empire Building: Britain's Annexation of Lagos, 1861." *Journal of Economic History* 40:4 (1980): 777-98.

Ilesanmni, Adetokumo Oluwole. "Urban Sustainability in the Context of Lagos mega-city." *Journal of Geography and Regional Planning* 3:10 (October 2010): 240-252.

Immerwahr, Daniel. "The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism in Postcolonial Lagos, 1960-1986." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 19:2 (December 2007): 177-82.

Jackson, Mark. "Film Reviews: *Lagos/Koolhaas*." *Visual Anthropology Review* 22:1 (Spring 2006): 97-99.

Jaiyebo, Oluremi. "Women and Household Sustenance: Changing livelihoods and survival strategies in the peri-urban areas of Ibadan." *Environment and Urbanization* 15:1 (April 2003): 111-20.

Janson, Marloes. *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Megacity Lagos*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2014.

Kasarda, J.D. and E.M. Crenshaw. "Third World Urbanization: Dimensions, Theories, and Determinants." *Annual Review of Sociology* 17 (1991): 467-501.

Kasarda, J.D. and Allan Parnell, *Third World Cities: Problems, Policies and Prospects*. New York: SAGE Publications, 1993.

Kay, Iris. "FESTAC 77." *African Arts* 11:1 (October 1977): 50-1.

Kloosterman, Robert, Joanne van der Leun, and Jan Rath. "Mixed Embeddedness: (In)formal Economic Activities and Immigrant Businesses in the Netherlands." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23:2 (June 1999): 252-66.

Kloosterman, Robert. "Creating Opportunities: Polices Aimed at Increasing Openings for Immigrant Entrepreneurs in The Netherlands." *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 15 (2003): 167-81.

Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Koolhaas, Rem. "Whatever Happened to Urbanism?" *Design Quarterly* 164 (1995): 28.

Koolhaas, Rem, and Bruce Mau. *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large: Office for Metropolitan Architecture*. New York: Monacelli Press, 1998.

Koolhaas, Rem, and Judy Chung Chuihua. *The Project on the city: Pearl River Delta*. Köln: Taschen, 2001.

Koolhaas, Rem, Jeffrey Inaba, Sze Tsung Leong, Tae-wook Cha, and Judy Chung Chuihua. *Project on the City II: The Harvard Guide to Shopping*. Köln: Taschen, 2001.

Koolhaas, Rem, Stefano Boeri, Nadia Tazi, Hans Ulrich Obrist. *Mutations* Barcelona: ACTAR, 2001.

Koolhaas, Rem. "Fragment of a Lecture in Lagos." In *Under Siege: Four African Cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*, eds. Okwui Enwezor et al. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2002.

Koolhaas, Rem, and Bregtje van der Haak. *Lagos/Koolhaas*. Brooklyn, NY: Icarus Films, 2002, DVD.

Koolhaas, Rem, and Véronique Patteeuw. *Considering Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture: what is OMA*. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2003.

Koolhaas, Rem. *Content*. Köln: Taschen, 2004.

Koolhaas, Rem. *Junkspace*. New York: New York Review Books, 2016.

Lawal, Babatunde. "The Living Dead: Art & Immortality among the Yoruba of Nigeria." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 47:1 (1977): 50-61.

Lawanson, Taibat, Omoayena Yadua, and Idris Salako. "Environmental Challenges of Peri-Urban Settlements the Lagos Megacity." In *Remixing the City: Towards Sustainability and Resilience?* Paper presented at the 17th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society, Schwechat, Austria, May 14-16, 2012.

Lawuyi, Olatunde Bayo. "The World of the Yoruba Taxi Driver: An Interpretive Approach to Vehicle Slogans." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 58:1 (1988): 1-13.

Lelard, L. C. "Lagos in Portugal and Lagos in Nigeria." *Nigeria Magazine*. 39 (1952): 257-60.

Le Roux, Hannah. "The Networks of Tropical Architecture." *Journal of Architecture* 8:3 (January 2003): 337-54.

Le Roux, Hannah. "Building on the Boundary: Modern Architecture in the Tropics." *Social Identities* 10:4 (2004): 439-53.

Le Roux, Hannah. "Modern Architecture in Post-Colonial Ghana and Nigeria." *Architectural History* 47 (2004): 361-92.

Lindsay, Lisa. "To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos." *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 15:1 (1994): 22-50.

Lloyd, R., B. Parr, S. Davies, T. Partridge, C. Cooke. "A Comparison of the Physiological Consequences of Head-Loading for African and European Women." *European Journal of Applied Physiology* 104:4 (July 2010): 607-16.

Lloyd, R., B. Parr, S. Davies, T. Partridge, C. Cooke. "Subjective Perceptions on Load Carriage on the Head and Back in Xhosa Women." *Applied Ergonomics* 41:4 (July 2010): 522-29.

Losi, John. *History of Lagos*. Lagos: African Education Press, 1967.

Loukaitou-Sideris, Anatasia, and Renia Ehrenfeucht. *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.

Magee, Carol. "Lagos is Everywhere: Digital Sound Art and Ever-Expanding Possibilities." *Critical Interventions* 8:3 (2014): 342-47.

Magnin, Andre. *J.D. Okhai Ojeikere: Photographs*. Paris: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, 2000.

Mann, Kristin. *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change the Educated Class in Colonial Lagos*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Mann, Kristin. *Slavery and the Birth of an African City, 1760-1900*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.

Masquelier, Adeline. "Road Mythologies: Space, Mobility, and the Historical Imagination in Post-colonial Niger." *American Ethnologist* 29:4 (2002): 829-56.

Marr, Stephen. "Worlding and Wilding: Lagos and Detroit as Global Cities." *DSpace Repository* (2016): 3-21.

Marris, Peter. *Family and Social Change in an Africa City: A Study of Rehousing in Lagos*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962.

Martinez Vázquez, Ricardo, and Christian Perazzone. *Zanele Muholi: African Women Photographers*. Barcelona: La Fábrica/Casa África, 2012.

Mbembe, Achille. "Afropolitianisme," *Africultures* 1:66 (2006): 9-15.

Mbembe, Achille and Susan Nuttall. *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

McNeill. Donald. *The Global Architect: Firms, Fame and Urban Form*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Meinwald, Dan. "*Memento Mori*: Death in Nineteenth Century Photography." *CMP Bulletin* 9:4 (1990): 1-32.

Meyer, Brigit. "'Delivered from the Powers of Darkness' Confessions of Satanic Riches in Christian Ghana." *Africa; Journal of the International African Institute* 65:2 (1995): 236-55.

Meyer, Brigit. "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 447-74.

Miller, Kimberly. "Cross-Dressing at the Crossroads: Mimic and Ambivalence in Yoruba Masked Performance." In *Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture*, Susan Fillin-Yeh, ed. New York: New York University Press, 2001.

Mitchell, W.J.T. *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005.

Morka, Felix. "A Place to Live; A Case Study of the Ijora-Badia Community in Lagos, Nigeria," in *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements* (2007). http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/GRHS.2007.CaseStudy.Tenure.Nigeria.pdf.

Moutoussamy-Ashe, Jeanne. *Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers*. New York: Writers & Readers Publishing, 1993.

Muholi, Zanele. *Zanele Muholi: Faces and Phases* (London: Prestel, 2010).

Nantulya, V.M., and Michael R. Reich. "The neglected epidemic: roads traffic injuries in developing countries." *British Medical Journal* 324:7346 (2002): 1139-1141.

Nimis, Érika. "The Rise of Nigerian Women in the Visual Media." *Visual Anthropology* 19:5 (2006): 423-441.

Nimis, Érika. *Photographes d'Afrique de l'Ouest: L'expérience* Yoruba. Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2005.

Nimis, Érika. "Lagos, Nigeria: Capital of Photography." *Ciel Variable*: *art, photo, medias, culture* 102 (2016): 47-55.

Nwagbogu, Azu. *Dey Your Lane! Lagos Variations*. Brussels: Bozar Books, 2016.

Nwanna, Chinwe. "Gentrification in Nigeria: the Case of Two Housing Estates in Lagos." In *Global Gentrifications: Uneven Development and Displacement*. Eds. Loretta Lees, Hyun Bang Shin, and Ernesto Lopez-Morales. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Nwannebuike, Udeh, and Onwuka Onuka. "Transforming Road Infrastructure in Nigeria – Revisiting the Public Private Partnership Option." *International Journal of Development Research* 5:7 (July 2015): 5115-30.

Nwafor, Okechukwu, C. "Photography: Daguerroetype and the African Experience." Mgbakoigba: Journal of African Experience 4 (20150: 1-11.

Nzegwu, Nkiru. "Bypassing New York in Re-Presenting Eko: Production of Space in a Nigerian City." In *Re-Presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the Twenty-First Century Metropolis*, ed. Anthony D. King. New York: NYU Press, 1996.

Obadare, Ebenezer. "Pentecostal Presidency? The Lagos-Ibadan 'Theocratic Class' and the Muslim 'Other.'" *Review of African Political Economy* 110 (2006): 665-78.

Obalum, D.C., S.O. Giwa, T.O. Adekoya-Cole, and G.O. Enweluzo. "Profile of spinal injuries in Lagos, Nigeria." *Spinal Cord* 47: 2(2009): 134-137.

Obono, Oka. "A Lagos Thing: Rules and Realities in the Nigerian Megacity." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 8:2 (Summer/Fall 2007): 31-48.

Odeleye, Joshua Adetunjji. "Improved Road Traffic Environment for Better Child Safety in Nigeria." *ICTCT Workshop, 13th International Conference on Pedestrians and Road Design* (2000).

Odufuwa, B.O., I.A. Ademiluyi, and O.H. Adedeji. "Transport Poverty and Deviant Driving Behavior in Nigerian Intermediate Cities." (published electronically): https://dev.codatu.org/wp-content/uploads/Transport-poverty-and-deviant-driving-behaviour-in-Nigerian-intermediate-cities-B.O.-ODUFUWA-I.A.-ADEMILUYI.pdf

Ogunlewe, M.O., O. James, Akinola L. Ladiende, and W.L. Adeyemo. "Pattern of pediatric maxillofacial fractures in Lagos, Nigeria." *International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry* 16:5 (2006): 358-362.

Okeke-Agulu, Chika. *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Okonkwo, Rina. *Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930*. Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1995.

Okukoju, Ayodeji. "The Segregation of Europeans and Africans in Colonial Nigeria." *Security, Crime and Segregation in West African Cities since the 19th Century*, Laurent Fourchard and Isaac Olawale Albert, eds. Paris: Kartala (2003).

Oloko, Beatrice Adenike. "Children's Street Work in Urban Nigeria as Adaptation and Maladaptation to Changing Socioeconomic Circumstances." *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 16:3 (1993): 465-82.

Oloko, Beatrice Adenike. "Children's Street Work in Urban Nigeria: Dilemma of Modernizing Tradition." In *Cross-Cultural Roots of Minority Child Development*, eds., Patricia M. Greenfield and Rodney R. Cooking. New York: Psychology Press, 1994.

Olomo, R.O. "The Legacy of Colonialism on Mapping in Africa: Focus on Nigeria." http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.597.2472

Olpadwala, Porus and William Goldsmith. "The Sustainability of Privilege: Reflections on the Environment, the Third World City and Poverty." *World Development* 20:4 (1992): 627-640.

Olufemi, O.B., and M.S. Oluseyi. "The Urban Poor and Mobility Stress in Nigerian Cities." *Environmental Research Journal* 1:1-4 (2007): 1-8.

Oni, S.I. and K.R. Okanlawon. "An Assessment of the Usage of the Lagos Mass Transit Trains." *International Journal of Railway* 5:1 (March 2012): 29-37.

Onikoyi, Agbola Ashake. *The History of Lagos*. Lagos: Toklast Press, Ltd., 1975.

Onwudike, Madu, Olufemi A. Olaloye, and Olusol O.A. Oni. "Teaching Hospital perspective on the quality of trauma care in Lagos, Nigeria." *World Journal of Surgery* 25:1 (2001): 112-15.

Orie, Olanike Ola. "Pointing the Yoruba Way." *Gesture* 9, no. 2 (2009): 237-61.

Osasona, Cordelia. "From Traditional Residential Architecture to the Vernacular: The Nigerian Experience. (2007): 1-23. www.mudoline.org/aat/2007_documents/AAT_Osasona

Osinulu, Damola. "Painters, Blacksmiths and Wordsmiths: Building Molues in Lagos." *African Arts* 41:3 (Autumn 2008): 44-53.

Osoba, Samson Babatunde. "Appraisal of Parking Problems and Traffic Management Measures in Central Business District in Lagos, Nigeria." *Journal of Sustainable Development* 5:8 (August 2012): 105-15.

Packer, George. "The Megacity: Decoding the Chaos of Lagos." *The New Yorker*, November 13, 2006: 65-75.

Peffer, John and Elisabeth Cameron. *Portraiture & Photography in Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Peil, Margaret. *Lagos: The City is the People*. London: Belhaven, 1991.

Popoola, S.O. "Scanning the Environment for Competitive Advantage: A Study of Corporate Banking Managers in Nigeria." *Libri* 50:3 (2000): 210-16.

Ralson, Richard. "The Return of Brazilian Freedman to West Africa in the 18th and 19th Centuries." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 3:3 (Autumn 1969): 577-93.

Roy, Ananya. "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism." *International Journal of Urban Regional Research* 35:2 (March 2011): 223-38.

Ryan, James. *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*. London: Reaktion Books, 1997.

Sanusi, Sanusi L. "Banking Reform and its Impact on the Nigerian Economy," *CBN Journal of Applied Statistics* 2:2 (2012): 115-22.

Schmidt, Charles. "Unfair Trade: e-Waste in Africa." *Environmental Health Perspectives* 114:4 (April 2006): 232-35.

Sekula, Allan. "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning." In *Thinking Photography*, Victor Burgin, ed. London: Macmillion, 1982.

Siglet, Jennifer. "Interview with Rem Koolhaas," *Index Magazine*, 2000: http://www.indexmagazine.com/interviews/rem_koolhaas.shtml.

Silva, Bisi. *J.D. Okhai Ojeikere*. Lagos: CCA Lagos, 2015.

Simon, David. "Urbanization, Globalization, and the Economic Crisis in Africa." In *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Large Cities*, edited by Carole Rakoid, New York: United Nations University Press, 1997.

Simone, AbdouMaliq. *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

Simone, AbdouMaliq. *City Life from Jakarta to Dakar: Movements at the Crossroads*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Smith, Robert. *Lagos Consulate, 1851-1861*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Smythe, Hugh H. "Urbanization in Nigeria." *Anthropological Quarterly* 33:3 (1960): 143-48.

Solagberu, B.A., C.K.P. Ofoegbu, L.O. Abdur-Rahman, A.O. Adekanye, U.S. Udoffa, and J. Taiwo. "Pre-hospital care in Nigeria: a country without emergency medical services." *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice* 12:1 (2009): 29-33.

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Toronto: MaGraw-Hill, 1978.

Sprague, Stephen. "Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba See Themselves." *African Arts* 12, no. 1 (1978):172-85.

Stevenson, Michael. *Zanele Muholi: Only Half The Picture*. Johannesburg: Stevenson Gallery, 2006.

Stickrodt, Silke. "The Brazilian Diaspora to West African in the Nineteenth Century." In *AfricAmericas: Itineraries, Dialogues and Sounds*, eds. Ineke Phat and Tiago de Oliveria Pinto. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008.

Subirós, Pep. *Africas: The Artist and the City, A Journey and an Exhibition*. Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, 2001.

Sule, R.A. Olu. "Recent Slum Clearance Exercise in Lagos (Nigeria): Victims or Beneficiaries?" *GeoJournal* 22:1 (September 1990): 81-91.

Thomas, Martins O., and Ezekiel O. Ogunleye. "Penetrating chest trauma in Nigeria." *Asian Cardiovascular and Thoracic Annals* 13:2 (2005): 103-106.

Thompson, Lara. "In Praise of Speed: The Value of Velocity in Contemporary Cinema." *Dandelion* 2, no.1, (2011): 1-5.

Togunde, Dimeji, R., and Sylvester Osagie. "Icons of Progress: Returnees' Effects on Decisions by Nigerians to Migrate to the Us." *International Review of Modern Sociology* 35: 1 (Spring 2009): 115-35.

Tormey, Jane. *Cities and Photography*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Tuakli-Wosornu, Taiye "Global Connections." *International Review of African American Art* 22:3 (2008): 35-37.

Uduku, Ola. "Modernist Architecture and 'The Tropical' in West Africa: The Tropical Architecture Movement in West Africa, 1948-1970." *Habitat International* 3:3 (2006): 396-411.

Ugboko, V.I., S.A. Odusanya, and O.O. Fagade. "Maxillofacial fact3ures in semi-urban Nigerian teaching hospital: A review of 442 cases." *International Journal of oral and maxillofacial surgery* 27:4 (1998): 286-89.

van der Valk, Arnold. "The Dutch Planning Experience." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 58 (2002): 201-10.

Vickery, D. J. "Contemporary Nigerian Architecture" and "Modern Architecture in Lagos." *Nigeria Magazine*. 73 (1962): 44-62.

Vidler, Anthony. "Photojournalism: Planning the City from Above and from Below." In *The City Companion*, eds. G. Bridge and S. Watson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002): 35-45.

Vlach, John Michael. "The Brazilian House in Nigeria: The Emergence of a 20th century Vernacular House Type." *The Journal of American Folklore* 97:383 (Jan-Mar 1984): 3-23.

Wakely, Patrick. "The Development of a School: An Account of the Department of Development and Tropical Studies of the Architectural Association." *Habitat International* 7:56 (1983): 337-46.

Waterman, Christopher. "Asíkò, Sákárà and Palmwine: Popular Music and Social Identity in Inter-War Lagos, Nigeria." *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 17:2/3 (Summer/Fall 1988): 229-58.

Weiner, Deborah. *Architecture and Social Reform in Late-Victorian London*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Wells, Liz. *Land Matters*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

White, Anthony. "The Trouble with Twins: Image and Ritual of the Yoruba ère ìbejì." *emaj: online journal of art* 5 (2010): 1-23.

Whiteman, Kaye. *Lagos: A Cultural and Historical Companion*. Oxford: Signal Books, 2012.

Willis, Deborah. *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers, 1840 to the Present*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000.

Willis, Deborah, and Carla Williams. *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.

Winter, Alison. *Memory: Fragments of a Modern History*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Yeats, William. "The Second Coming." In *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats Volume I: The Poems: Revised Second Edition* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1996.

Young, Robert. *Post-colonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.